

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, January 3, 2016

The Epiphany of the Lord

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

THE MAGI & FedEx

Suppose for a moment that FedEx was operating when Jesus was born. Do you imagine the magi would have used that company to deliver their gifts to "the newborn king of the Jews?"

Just consider the time and stress they would have saved themselves by not traveling to Bethlehem. They could have beautifully packed their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, attached a heartfelt note to each one, and then have them shipped FedEx Priority Overnight. And if the FedEx carriers were unsure of where to go, they could have just followed the star.

However, as we know, the magi had no such option, and even if it had existed they would still have made the trip themselves. They wanted to do more than simply deliver gifts to this newborn infant whose birth was marked by a star in the sky.

This Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 2:1-12) reveals that the magi wanted to see this child born in Bethlehem, to offer him their homage, and to present him with gifts that indicated their understanding of who this child truly was. He was a king worthy of precious gold, a priest deserving of frankincense to offer in worship, and a prophet whose broken body would be anointed with myrrh.

The magi came so they could personally be in the presence of one whose birth had been heralded in the heavens and prophesied in the scriptures. While they gave him wondrous gifts to be sure, they also gave him the best gift they could offer, the gift of themselves.

In doing so, the magi gave Jesus the very gift he had given them and the entire world. Jesus, the Son of God, took on flesh and came among us. God did not simply give us gifts, he became the gift. He came to be with us in the child of Bethlehem.

The gift of our presence is truly the best gift we can give another person. The gift of our time, our attention, our concern, our understanding, our love is better than anything that we place in a box and have delivered to someone's door.

This season of Christmas proclaims that the God who came at Bethlehem is still among us. God is present in word, in sacrament, in his Church, in holy and loving people, in the ordinariness of human life, and above all in the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

In return what God wants from each of us is the best gift the magi brought that first Christmas – they brought themselves. God wants our presence and our love. God wants us to draw ever closer to him. Those are gifts that cannot be wrapped and shipped; they have to be personally delivered.

Best Wishes for a New Year filled with God's Presence and Peace!