



## The Gospel & Homily † el Evangelio y la Homilía

3 January 2021

The Epiphany - La Epifanía

### Announcements

We are not meeting for Mass this Sunday. I hope that as you read this you feel the absence of your church family and pray for their safety; and for all those who suffer from sickness. May God protect the faithful.

Let us pray for the departure of this virus that changes how we worship and takes away our closeness; but never alters our love and faith in the Lord.

We pray for our loved ones and so many others in the world.

We are steadfast in the face of this challenge, through the courage and example of Jesus Christ.

- Welcome. Happy New Year.
- Happy birthday to Fr. Bob Swick this Tuesday.
- Happy anniversary to Carol & Harry this coming Saturday.
- We had front porch visits this week. It was great to see you all. Please take a look at the end of this video and think happy thoughts and best New Year wishes for your church family.
- The National Assembly, also called a Synod, will be held January 16th, for most of the day. This is a video conference event. Every person in every one of our thirty-some churches and missions is invited.

Bringing this all together on a large scale is a big event and very important to our national church; and it comes with significant cost.

Please make a suggested donation of \$50 per person. This amount should NOT prohibit anyone from joining our National Assembly event. Give what you can for this very important occasion bringing together all of our churches in the Province. It supports this National Assembly and future expenses of the greater church. I am sending an email to all of you with more information.

- Thank you all very much for the cards and your gift. I hope your Christmas was as merry as it could be this year.
- Let us watch the news carefully and pray for the distribution of a vaccine so that all churches may resume the gathering that means so much.
- I will stay in touch with each of you as we plan our church schedule for the months ahead. Please also visit the website at <https://spcath.org>

## Gospel Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: `And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.



## Homily

There is little than can be added to the Gospel. It's a story that we've heard since we were children. It was foretold in the Old Testament as a prophecy. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and the world was given a savior.

There is no bigger story in history than the life of Christ. There is no love bigger than that of God who gave his son for us. There are human words which hardly do justice to describe what the Holy Spirit is... It is God, it is Jesus, it is all of you, it is everyone in the world; being one with the Holy Spirit in faith and thankfulness.

So when we're all together in this spirit, how do we, or can we, channel our love of God, our faith and devotion to God during our life and our own personal ministry to be part of, and to teach others that the Holy Spirit is the place to be?

Christian worship and religion all have a common thread... Christ. So how is it that we have such a variety of Christian churches and denominations? There are Catholics and Protestants and even those two primary branches are subdivided. There are dozens of other religions which certainly worship God but are not Christ-based. I want to focus on a smaller group to discuss because we could certainly go on for hours.

I mentioned that Christian churches all have a common thread... that would be Christ... and we have a manual of sorts called the Bible. Now.. if all of these churches practice their worship separately in life... and when people leave this world for heaven... do they have divisions in heaven too? Divisions within religions are not present in heaven. Nor are language barriers or physical limitations or any other silly impediments or habits that we have in our earthly lives.

Let's talk about where we are at this moment in our religious worship and our church. The people of St. Paul practice as Catholics, which is both a narrow term and a broad term. The bigger view separates us from protestants. The narrow view separates us from Roman Catholics.

That is not the intention of God, nor is it ours... to be separate.

I just said the word 'separate' four times in two paragraphs. !!!!!!!

I think all churches and the people in them are resigned to making choices in this order:

ONE – Humans will congregate for whatever reason they need to do so, in a place they are comfortable.

TWO – Humans need a deity; for Christians... the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For about 2000 years ministers have preached the Gospel and taught the word of God to groups of people who felt comfortable in the company of both the ministers and the other people sitting with them. Ministers teach and preach because people need God in their lives.

Over hundreds of years, congregations of people formed. But then it got complicated. People and ministers attached labels and names to their groups and they began to call it this religion and that religion. Leaders emerged. Stylistic preaching and rules were developed.

Clothing and rituals were added. Egos grew to immense proportions. People were murdered for God and wars were fought. For some, power and pride were motives and God was a tool to get their ego in high gear.

So this is where we are today, in a world of churches that are stuck with labels. People who need to be comfortable with the church and the people that they worship with. Comfort takes first place before Jesus Christ and his teaching. So sad for so many people and churches.

But that is not what happens here. This church of St. Paul, and you people, are certainly an example of inclusiveness and worship as a family. Please continue to set the finest example.

I thank the Lord that I was guided to you. I am fortunate to be here, and very honored to be your pastor.



## Evangelio Mateo 2:1-12

Después de nacer Jesús en Belén de Judea, en tiempos del rey Herodes, he aquí, unos magos del oriente llegaron a Jerusalén, diciendo: ¿Dónde está el Rey de los judíos que ha nacido? Porque vimos su estrella en el oriente y hemos venido a adorarle. Cuando lo oyó el rey Herodes, se turbó, y toda Jerusalén con él. Entonces, reuniendo a todos los principales sacerdotes y escribas del pueblo, indagó de ellos dónde había de nacer el Cristo. Y ellos le dijeron: En Belén de Judea, porque así está escrito por el profeta: «Y tú, Belén, tierra de Judá, de ningún modo eres la más pequeña entre los príncipes de Judá; porque de ti saldrá un Gobernante que pastoreará a mi pueblo Israel». Entonces Herodes llamó a los magos en secreto y se cercioró con ellos del tiempo en que había aparecido la estrella. Y enviándolos a Belén, dijo: Id y buscad con diligencia al Niño; y cuando le encontréis, avisadme para que yo también vaya y le adore. Y habiendo oído al rey, se fueron; y he aquí, la estrella que habían visto en el oriente iba delante de ellos, hasta que llegó y se detuvo sobre el lugar donde estaba el Niño. Cuando vieron la estrella, se regocijaron sobremanera con gran alegría. Y entrando en la casa, vieron al Niño con su madre María, y postrándose le adoraron; y abriendo sus tesoros le presentaron obsequios de oro, incienso y mirra. Y habiendo sido advertidos por Dios en sueños que no volvieran a Herodes, partieron para su tierra por otro camino.



## Homilía

Hay poco que se pueda agregar al Evangelio. Es una historia que hemos escuchado desde que éramos niños. Fue predicho en el Antiguo Testamento como una profecía. Jesús nació en Belén y el mundo recibió un salvador.

No hay historia más grande en la historia que la vida de Cristo. No hay amor más grande que el de Dios que dio a su hijo por nosotros. Hay palabras humanas que difícilmente hacen justicia para describir lo que es el Espíritu Santo ... Es Dios, es Jesús, son todos ustedes, son todos en el mundo; siendo uno con el Espíritu Santo en fe y agradecimiento.

Entonces, cuando estamos todos juntos en este espíritu, ¿cómo podemos, o podemos, canalizar nuestro amor por Dios, nuestra fe y devoción a Dios durante nuestra vida y nuestro propio ministerio personal para ser parte y enseñar a otros que el ¿El Espíritu Santo es el lugar para estar?

El culto cristiano y la religión tienen un hilo común ... Cristo. Entonces, ¿cómo es que tenemos tal variedad de iglesias y denominaciones cristianas? Hay católicos y protestantes e incluso esas dos ramas primarias están subdivididas. Hay docenas de otras religiones que ciertamente adoran a Dios, pero no se basan en Cristo. Quiero concentrarme en un grupo más pequeño para discutir porque ciertamente podríamos continuar durante horas.

Mencioné que todas las iglesias cristianas tienen un hilo común ... que sería Cristo ... y tenemos una especie de manual llamado la Biblia. Ahora ... si todas estas iglesias practican su adoración por separado en la vida ... y cuando la gente deja este mundo por el cielo ... ¿también tienen divisiones en el cielo? Las divisiones dentro de las religiones no están presentes en el cielo. Tampoco lo son las barreras del idioma o las limitaciones físicas o cualquier otro impedimento o hábito tonto que tengamos en nuestra vida terrenal.

Hablemos de dónde estamos en este momento en nuestro culto religioso y nuestra iglesia. La gente de St. Paul practica como católicos, que es tanto un término limitado como un término amplio. La visión más amplia nos separa de los protestantes. La visión estrecha nos separa de los católicos romanos.

Esa no es la intención de Dios, ni es nuestra ... estar separados.

Acabo de decir la palabra "separar" cuatro veces en dos párrafos. !!!!!!!

Creo que todas las iglesias y las personas en ellas están resignadas a tomar decisiones en este orden:

UNO - Los seres humanos se congregarán por cualquier razón que necesiten para hacerlo, en un lugar en el que se sientan cómodos.

DOS - Los humanos necesitan una deidad; para los cristianos ... el Padre y el Hijo y el Espíritu Santo.

Durante aproximadamente 2000 años, los ministros han predicado el Evangelio y enseñado la palabra de Dios a grupos de personas que se sentían cómodas en la compañía tanto de los ministros como de las demás personas que estaban sentadas con ellos. Los ministros enseñan y predicán porque las personas necesitan a Dios en sus vidas.

Durante cientos de años, se formaron congregaciones de personas. Pero luego se complicó. La gente y los ministros colocaron etiquetas y nombres a sus grupos y comenzaron a llamarlo esta religión y esa religión. Surgieron líderes. Se desarrollaron predicación y reglas estilísticas.

Se agregaron vestimentas y rituales. Los egos crecieron hasta alcanzar proporciones inmensas. La gente fue asesinada por Dios y se libraron guerras. Para algunos, el poder y el orgullo eran motivos y Dios era una herramienta para acelerar su ego.

Así que aquí es donde estamos hoy, en un mundo de iglesias que están pegadas a etiquetas. Personas que necesitan sentirse cómodas con la iglesia y las personas con las que adoran. El consuelo ocupa el primer lugar antes de Jesucristo y su enseñanza. Muy triste para tanta gente e iglesias.

Pero eso no es lo que pasa aquí. Esta iglesia de San Pablo, y ustedes, ciertamente son un ejemplo de inclusión y adoración en familia. Continúe dando el mejor ejemplo.

Doy gracias al Señor porque fui guiado hacia ti. Soy afortunado de estar aquí y muy honrado de ser su pastor.

