

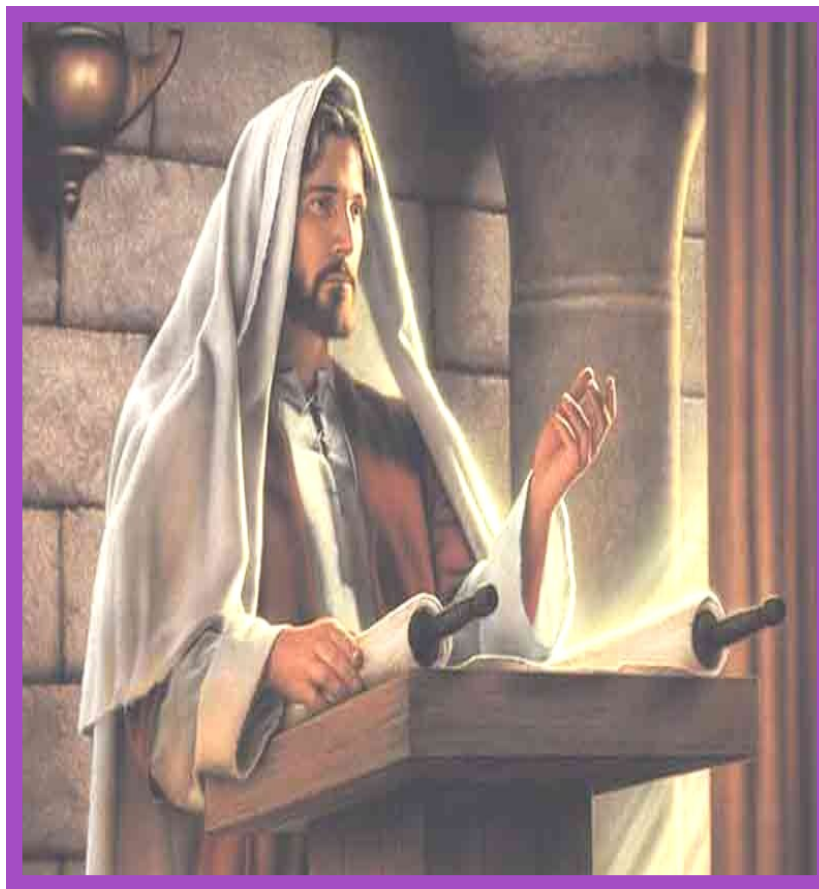
Therefore, lift up your hearts to the shining grace of the sempiternal Light, and adoring the precious mysteries of man's redemption, give earnest thought to what had been done for you. Love the purity of chastity, because Christ is the Son of virginity. Refrain from carnal desires which war against the soul, as the Blessed Apostle presiding over us has, as we read, exhorted us in his own words (1 Pet. ii. 11). In malice be children (1 Cor. xiv. 20), the Lord of glory has subjected Himself to the childhood of mortal sin.

Follow in the way of humility, which the Son of God deigned to show His Disciples (Mt. xi. 29). Clothe yourself with the strength of patience, in which you shall have the power to possess your soul. Since He Who is the Redemption of all men, is also the strength of all men (Lk. xxi. 19). Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth (Col. iii. 2). Walk in steadfastness along the way of truth and of life, and neither let things of earth ensnare you, for whom the things of heaven are prepared, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns world without end. Amen.



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**SERMON ON
THE VISIT OF THE MAGI'S
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
132 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 2: 1-12

by: Saint Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor

Having celebrated in the recent festival the day in which the most pure Virgin gave birth to the Savior of Mankind, the venerable feast of the Epiphany brings to us a continuation of joy, so that between the kindred mysteries of these linked solemnities, the liveliness of our rejoicing and the fervor of our faith, may not grow cool. For it was in view of the salvation of all men that the infancy of the Mediator between God and Man was revealed to the world while He was detained in the little village. For even though He had chosen the people of Israel, and one family among that people, from which to assume the nature of humanity; yet it was not His will that His Birth be concealed within the obscurity of His Mother's dwelling. He wished rather to become known at once to all men, since He had deigned to be born for all.

So there appeared in the East, to the three Magi, a star of new splendor, which being brighter and more beautiful than the other stars, would readily draw to itself the eyes and minds of all beholders, so that it would immediately be seen that a sight so strange had a special meaning. Then He Who set up the sign gave to those who beheld it an understanding of its meaning. What He gave them to see, he led them to seek, and being sought for He let Himself be found. The three men follow the guide of this heavenly light, and journeying together, with eyes fixed upon the light going before them, they are led by the brightness of His grace to the knowledge of the Truth. They who believed from human reasoning, that they must seek the newborn King, Whose sign they had seen, in the royal city. But He Who had taken the form of a servant, and had come not to judge, but to be judged, chose Bethlehem for His birth, but Jerusalem for His passion.

Herod learning that a King was born to the Jews, and suspecting a successor, is in great fear. While he is planning death for the Author of our salvation, he makes false promises of coming to pay homage to Him. How happy would he be, had he imitated the faith of the Magi,

and bestowed on religion what he gave to treachery. O blind impiety of senseless envy! Do you propose in your madness to defeat the divine will? The Lord of the world seeks no earthly kingdom, but bestows an eternal one. To what end do you strive to overthrow the unchangeable order of what has been decreed, or take upon yourself beforehand another's crime?

The death of Christ is not for your time. For before the Gospel must be established, before that the kingdom of heaven has to be preached, the sick must be healed, miracles must be wrought. Why do you wish that to be your crime which is to be the work of another? Why, since your attempt must fail, do you bring upon yourself the guilt of an evil will? You gain nothing by this contriving, you accomplish nothing. He that of His own will was born, will die at a time that He shall decide.

The Magi's then fulfill their desire, and following this very star, they come at length to the Child, the Lord Jesus Christ. They adore the Word in the flesh. Wisdom in infancy, Power in weakness, and in true man the Lord of Majesty. The Magi's make clear the mystery of their faith and understanding, that which they believe in their heart, they proclaim by their gifts. They offer incense to God, myrrh to man, and gold to a King, with knowledge adoring in unity the human nature and the divine. For what was proper to the persons is not separated from the Godhead.

The Magi's return to their own country, and Jesus by divine warning is taken into Egypt. The madness of Herod, foiled in its evil purpose, now flames up. He gives orders that the little children of Bethlehem be put to death, since he knows not who the infant may be Whom he fears. He extends the sentence to that age which is suspect to him. But that which the impious king cuts down in this world, Christ replants in heaven. They for whom He has not yet given the ransom of His Blood, now receive the glory of martyrdom.