



From the Pastor
January 8, 2023
The Epiphany
of the Lord

EPIPHANY AND THE EUCHARIST. As you may know, we have devoted our bulletin article column to the USA Bishops' National Eucharistic Revival document **The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church.** This 3

-year revival should help us better understand and celebrate our **Lord's Real Presence** in the **Eucharist.** This is part 22 in the series; for past articles and our Bishop's series on the Eucharist, go to our parish website - stjustin.org.

ARTISTIC LICENSE. Unlike photographs, which are exact images of its subject [unless it is altered or 'photoshopped'], artists who claim 'artistic license' enhance their works to emphasize its deeper meaning; or they alter their works to better tell the whole story. We see an example of this [above] in the 16th Century, Netherlandish artist, Hieronymus Bosch's [1450-1516] oil painting, which is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, entitled **'The Adoration of the Magi.'** Let's look at what his 'artistic license' depicts.

The central image of his work is a **wooden table**, over which our **Blessed Mother** holds the **Christ Child** as He reaches for one of the **Magi's** gifts. **Saint Joseph**, standing in the background, reverently removes his cap to welcome his splendidly clad visitors, or scratches his head, perplexed by the mystery taking place before his very eyes. Two shy but curious shepherds peer over the shed's back wall, as an **ox**, the animal used in religious sacrifice, and an **ass**, look on from the other side. Sadly, the image on the **King's beige** and **gold cape** is not discernable in this poor copy of the painting; it depicts the **Israelites** gathering the **manna** or **bread from heaven** that rained down for them during their 40-year desert journey to the **Promised Land.** We find other **Eucharistic** themes in this painting.

As we sing in the beloved **Christmas** carol, **'We Three Kings,'** the three gifts give us a clue to the **Christ Child's** identity and role. **Gold**, the gift fit for a king, highlights His eternal kingship over the universe. **Frankincense** highlights His role as

the **Eternal High Priest** who offered the greatest **Sacrifice** of all: Himself. **Myrrh**, the burial ointment, foretells His **crucifixion** and **death** for our salvation. In the **Holy Sacrifice of the Mass**, **Christ** is truly present so that we can receive Him at the **Altar** or **Table of the Lord.** For as we sing in the last verse of that carol: **"Glorious now, behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice!"**

Even the **Magi's** question, **"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."** [Matthew 2:2] has **Eucharistic** overtones. For as the saying goes, **'Wise men [and women] still seek Him.'** And where will we find Him? **"Not,"** as we sing in **'Once in David's Royal City,'** **"in that poor lowly stable, With the oxen standing by."** We can find Him in every place He said He would be: in the poor and needy, the sick and dying; in **His holy word**; in those who gather in **His holy Name**; those joined in **Sacramental Matrimony** and the **Ordained**; and, above all, in the **Breaking of the Bread: His Real Presence** in the **Eucharist.**

However, once we **find** Him, and even more so, once we **receive** Him in the **Eucharist**, we must heed the angel's warning to the **Magi:** **"They departed for their country by another way."** [Matthew 2:12] Our lives cannot be the same once we come in contact with - or consume - the **Christ** to whom the **Magi** were led by a 'star' - and others by the prophecies of old as detailed by the chief priests and scribes. These roles - of the 'star' and of the chief priest and scribes' - are now done by the **Church** and her teachings, her leaders and their ministry. And one major way she offers us the directions that can lead us to **Jesus** is through the **holy Mass.** Again, we are obligated to participate in **Saturday evening** or **Sunday Mass** to get that weekly dose of grace.

The revised **Order of Penance**, which governs **Confession**, is **optional** as of **February 22, 2023** [Ash Wednesday] but **mandatory** after **April 16, 2023** [Divine Mercy Sunday]. So, we will devote articles for the next few weeks to this revision. May the graces of this **Christmastime** continue to grow within us!

In Christ,

Father Mark