

- As I hope you all understand, the mysteries of our Lord's Incarnation and Nativity, which we honor at Christmas, do not stand alone. They're connected to a whole host of other mysteries that are important for us to understand.
- Thus, it is that through the Christmas Season, the Church combs through the immensity of these mysteries by a series of feast days, slowly savoring the love and goodness of the Lord revealed through these feasts.
- These mysteries are important, for they help us to believe more deeply that Jesus is not a fable or figment of a collective Christian imagination, but really and truly all that we believe Him to be by faith.
- Moreover, each of these mysteries is not simply a manifestation of our Lord's glory. Each of these mysteries is also a manifestation of God's deep love for humanity.
- For in the Christmas mysteries, we see our Lord coming to us – even becoming one of us and subjecting Himself to the human condition – to save us from our sins so that we can be united with Him for all eternity.
- And it is in this context that we must understand the feast that we celebrate today.
- Today we meditate upon our Lord's Epiphany, which is the manifestation of Christ to the entire world, and a further unfolding of the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord.
- While the mystery of the Incarnation, which is the mystery of our infinite and eternal God stepping into the limits of time and humanity, is difficult to grasp, God the Father wasn't about to keep it hidden! He wanted the world to know how much He loves us.
- Whereas at Christmas we celebrated that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in fulfillment of the great Jewish prophecies of the Old Testament, in the Epiphany we celebrate that Christ came not just for the Jews to whom He owed His human heritage, but that He came for us all.
- We see this in the fact that the Magi who come to do homage to the newborn King of the Jews were not Jews, but were gentiles from the East – astrologers by trade.
- In the beginning of Advent, we were repeatedly reminded of Christ's omnipotence and power as our readings and prayers spoke of His 2nd coming, and how He will bring all creation into submission to Himself when He does come.
- In today's feast, we get a sense of His power. In the mystery of the Epiphany of the Lord, we see His power to attract souls who will submit themselves to Him.
- Jesus is truth, and Truth has a very magnetic quality for people of good will. Truth has a power to attract people, to make itself known – even when people try to hide it. For people who earnestly and humbly seek it, Truth reveals itself.
- Being men of good will, the Magi would have had this natural attraction for Truth, and so it is no wonder that they traveled so far to see the Truth Incarnate.
- It's no wonder that they bowed down before Him in humble submission, gifting Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- We can only imagine how the Magi relished that name Jesus when they heard it spoken. We can only imagine the reverence with which they held His name and His memory in their hearts as they returned to their native land.

- Of course, in their actions we find much that is worthy of imitation, most especially their diligent searching for Truth, and their willingness to endure the arduousness of their journey to find and worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 - In this, the Magi show us that finding our Lord, adoring Him in humility, and offering to Him the best that we have to give is worth whatever difficulties we must overcome, and whatever personal cost and effort is required of us to do so.
 - To be in the Lord's presence and worship Him; to offer ourselves to Him is a privilege of inestimable worth. For it is only with God that we will ever find true joy and peace.
 - In this we see the grave sadness and grave sinfulness of missing Mass. How many Catholics in Charlotte woke up this morning and thought to themselves, "I don't feel like going to Mass"? Is your sloth that great?
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- We live in our place and time in which so many of us – even baptized Christians – seek fulfillment and peace in the things of this world.
 - Never is this more apparent than at Christmas, when so often we subordinate the true meaning of this holiday to its secular aspects, prioritizing earthy mammon over the divine treasures God wishes to share with us.
 - Sadly, we fail to celebrate the Christmas season as we should because we don't want to rise to the demands of the spiritual life. Yet, amazingly, we so often put a great deal of effort into securing our own earthly comfort, do we not?
 - We'll go out of our way to upgrade our homes and buy ourselves nice cars, but we won't make a special effort to celebrate Christmas as we should because we don't want to put in the effort.
 - And in this failure, we deprive ourselves of the peace that only comes from God, and we separate ourselves all the more from the Lord, Who wants to save us from our sins.
 - This is why we must really try to enter into the mysteries of our Faith as we recall and celebrate them in the liturgy.
 - This is why we must strive to be faithful in the practice of our beautiful Catholic Faith. It's why we must strive to be good sons and daughters of Holy Mother Church.
 - For in Christ alone is our only hope of salvation. But to get to Christ, to worship and adore Him as did the Magi, we must go to the Church. For it is in the Church that Christ is made present to us. Thus, it's in the Church that we find our salvation.
 - And so, if you're going to make any New Years' Resolutions, make the resolutions to go to Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, no matter what. Make the resolution to pray every day, and to really offer yourself to our Lord, and make the resolution to make a holy hour in Adoration at least once a week.
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- Brothers and sisters, the Epiphany is not simply a call to meditate on God's goodness in becoming the Savior for all mankind. It is the call to go to Jesus, to adore and do Him homage. As such, it's also a clarion call to practice our Catholic Faith with integrity.
 - Through the marvelous and joyful season of Christmas, we ponder some of the great mysteries of our Faith. They are not just charming stories about our Lord's birth.
 - The Christmas mysteries reveal for us God's love and goodness; they reveal what He has done for us in order to save us from our sins.

- So, as we recall these sacred mysteries, let us give thanks to our Lord for His tender mercy shown to us in becoming one of us. But may we also renew our determination to seek out Jesus and render Him proper worship, heedless of the personal cost.
- Any may we be faithful in practicing our Catholic faith with integrity, that we may know Christ in His fullness and benefit from the salvation that comes only through His Church.