

2022-12-DEC-ADVENT/CHRISTMAS #6

KNIGHTS' CHAPLAIN'S CORNER DEC 22 ADVENT/CHRISTMAS #6

CHRISTMAS SEASON #1 -- TWELVE DAYS OF JOY

I. FIESTAS Y SOLEMNIDADES

25 DEC	Christmas
26 DEC	St Stephan, first martyr
27 DEC	St John, Apostle & Evangelist
28 DEC	Holy Innocents, martyrs
01 JAN	Holy Mary, Mother of God; World Day of Prayer for Peace.
06 JAN	Epiphany
***	Holy Family

*** = movable feasts, no fixed date.

II. MEANING OF CHRISTMAS TIME

It is important to refocus on the true meaning of Christmas within the Christian family today bombarded by an exaggerated consumerism.

With Christmas begins a new liturgical season that ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This season is subdivided into two parts: 1) the Christmas Octave and 2) the days that go from January 2 to the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

The liturgical texts of this time invite us to contemplate the Son of God made man, in order to bring all of humanity into communion with God. The season highlights the incarnation, and therefore, stresses that the Christ Child placed in his lap of Mary is "true God born of true God."

The celebrations of these days, especially those of the days of the Octave, are intensely festive. It is important to distinguish the different days during this season. With regard to the Octave, we have, in the first place, the solemnities of Christmas itself and that of Holy Mary, Mother of God. During the feasts in-between which could be called "mixed"; the mystery of Christmas is celebrated, in parts by the very characteristic saints of this season (St Stephan, first martyr; St John Evangelist; & the Holy Innocents).

After the Christmas Octave, the liturgy maintains its festive character time of Christmas, but with less intensity than during the Octave. In this second part of the Christmas season, the Epiphany of the Lord is important. This celebration invites us to contemplate a new aspect of the Christmas mystery: the fact that Christ who "for us, men, and for our salvation became man", with his incarnation, has not only fulfilled the promises made to the patriarchs of Israel but, is also the redeemer of all of humanity, "for his mercy he wanted the Gentiles to glorify God" (see Rom 15: 8-9). The incarnation of Christ has a universal aspect.

The Christmas season concludes in a very meaningful and timely manner with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord: this celebration, invites us to contemplate the whole sense of these Christmas days. The Christmas season is much more important than a mere reminder of Jesus' childhood. This last feast of the season insists on the fact that we contemplated during the first days of the Christmas season, that Jesus manifests himself in humanity in order to reestablish the communion of humanity with God – this is our salvation. Jesus, in fact, descended to the Jordan with sinners, but when coming out of the water, in a certain way, he "elevates all humanity, bringing to God the world that was submerged in evil" (Saint Gregory of Nazianus).

THE HOLY FAMILY

I-INTRODUCTION

The family is the center of the life of faith. It is from there that faith is transmitted.

WE MUST FORM CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES/FAMILIES THAT LIVE LIKE

THE SACRED FAMILY OF NAZARETH

IN PRAISE, SIMPLICITY, AND HUMILITY.

Mary & Joseph were able to fulfill all the religious rites for their son in due time. They were not cold rites or merely obligations for them but celebrations of life, of faith, and of their surrender to God's will.

Today the concept of the family is undergoing profound changes. The process of secularization takes away from the family its sacred dimension. Despite this process and all the problems that the family has to face, it is possible for the family to manifest, even more today than in the past, its duty to form the Kingdom of God: a family at the service of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

II-THE FAMILY OF JESUS

The family of Jesus was never the fixed or absolute value in the life of Jesus. At all times, he took care to explain that his first mission was to fulfill the will of his Father, that is, to announce and establish the Kingdom of God (see Mt 12:50).

The family of his Father God was the central objective of his life and was the only thing that deserved his absolute loyalty.

III-THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The ability to live in charity is the sign par excellence that marks the Christian family. It is a source of unity within the family. The roles of all members of the family are always respected. But, recognizing that there is equality among all family members, it is possible to overcome the challenges, difficulties, and even the enmities that tend to arise. Recognizing in charity the dignity of each other member of the family, they become the first and foremost "neighbors" for each other.

The Christian family is always called to be open to others. If this is not the case, selfishness develops, the family focuses on itself as the most important "thing" in life, and it shows that the family is closed to everything outside – the family becomes the absolute and only value. This attitude is very typical when the family and the family alone is elevated to a very sacred level. All other responsibilities towards the community and others in charity and love are sacrificed to the needs of the supposedly all-powerful and all-important family.

A more Christian concept of family see the family as an entity open to others in charity and love, does not develop spontaneously either by itself or overnight. Even the parents of Jesus did not initially understand this (see Lk 2:50). The center of the Christian family that must always be taken into account and meditate all other matters is conversion, letting oneself die for others. This conversion takes place within a family, a community. You can never achieve it alone.

THE EPIPHANY

INTRODUCTION

According to the customs and traditions that have come to us in a distorted form, this is the feast of the Magi, the Wise Men, the Kings, or the end of Christmas season.

Here we have part of the origin of the tradition of gift giving at Christmas time. The gifts of the Wise Men were symbols of the life and person of Jesus. But now everything has been distorted by the unbridled commerce of gift purchases.

The wise men were neither kings nor magicians in the sense of the word today. Rather they were wise, scholars, teachers, or professors. By studying nature around them, they noticed changes in the stars and skies that announced the arrival of a new king. According to what the Gospel tells us, the magicians (who were not part of the descendants of Abraham - were not Jews) who had not received nor knew the Law of the Old

Testament, approached Jerusalem to question King Herod about his expectation of a new king, a messiah:
Where was the new king born?

Herod trembles - that same Herod who is still alive in the darkness of our hearts - before the possibility of someone coming to take away his throne, his independence, his moral code, his customs, his house (palace), his idols, or his lifestyle. With Herod, we say: I am at the center of everything, there cannot be another, this is my life.

The arrival of the wise sages symbolizes how Jesus is presented to the whole world, including the world beyond the limits of Israel. The word "Epiphany" means: MANIFESTATION or REVELATION. The child Jesus is manifested, shown, and revealed to the whole world. The Christian faith now becomes universal. The word "catholic" means UNIVERSAL.

When meeting the new king, the Messiah, the wise ones give him some special gifts, each symbolizes something of the person of Jesus:

GOLD	ROYALTY
INCENSE	DIVINITY
MYRRHA	DEATH / PASSION



The purpose of the gifts is to announce who Jesus is: a divine king with the vocation to die for all. They are not manifestations of the love, feelings, warm fuzzies, or the affection of the wise men towards the person of Jesus. The true meaning of the gifts of the wise men should not be painted over or confused with sweet tales. Their meaning is tied to true, mature Christian love in the dimension of the cross. The true WORSHIP of the child Jesus consists in recognizing Him as the Suffering Servant, as the Lamb of God. He is the fulfillment of the messianic vision in Isaiah 60.

JOY OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

FESTIVE MEALS, SWEETS, FRUIT CAKES, FAMILY ENCOUNTERS,
CHOCOLATES, DECORATIONS, GIFTS, LIGHTS,
RELIGIOUS SERVICES, CHRISTMAS TREES,
WREATHS, PRAYERS, PRAISES, FIREWORKS



The overflowing joy from our encounter with the Savior, the fulfillment of all our hopes.

peace & all that is good. friar Chris

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