

Today we celebrate the Epiphany; the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. The magi were not Jews; the three Kings (Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar) represented Europe, Arabia and Africa, respectively.

Jesus, born a Jew of the House of David, fulfils the prophesy that a savior would be born who would be a messiah and King. We, as non-Jewish Christians, or Gentiles, can revel in the fact that God came to us also, not just the Jews. Jesus came to save the whole world.

As the story goes, the magi brought three gifts – gold, frankincense and myrrh; the gold representing his royal standing as a king; frankincense his priestly role and divinity as God; and myrrh, a burial ointment, his mortality as human.

What gifts are we going to bring to Jesus?

Some historians suggest that if the magi were women, they would have stopped and asked for directions, gotten there in time to help

Mary deliver Jesus, cleaned the manger and brought gifts of baby clothes, diapers and casseroles.

What gifts are we going to bring to Jesus?

The obvious answer is that we bring the gift of ourselves, and that would be a great answer if it wasn't so general. So maybe we ought to go a little deeper.

Everything we are and everything we have is all because of God.

Whatever we do, wherever we go, it is because of God. When we get up in the morning and take that first breath of the day; that is because of God. That first bite of breakfast; that is because of God.

When God created the world and all that is in it, He created it good.

Everything is good; we are good. All because of God.

We've heard that we all have gifts of time, talent and treasure; that is all because of God.

And on top of all that, even though we mucked everything up, even though we spit in God's eye, He still loves us. Enough so that even with all the good gifts He has given us, He gave us His only Son to save us.

God has given us all these gifts, freely given; no strings attached.

What gifts are we going to bring to Jesus?

What could we possibly bring that doesn't pale in comparison to all He has given us?

Fortunately for us, God made it pretty simple.

He only asks us to give back to Him a little bit of what He has already given us: time, talent and treasure.

Treasure. Money. Currency. Legal tender. It's what makes the world go 'round. It's what puts a roof over our heads, food on the table and clothes on our backs. And it is what we use to help those who are less fortunate. And it is how we show appreciation for the good

things we have, such as this holy place. Yes, just like our homes need to be maintained, so does this holy place. And yes, just like we pay for the services that make our lives easier, we offer a little for the selfless service of those who do so much for us in our parish family.

Time. God gave us all the time in the world. He is still giving us, right now, time. And we are giving some of that time back to Him right now. We are gathered together to praise and worship Him. We are gathered together to be with Jesus, in Word and in Sacrament. We are gathered together to receive Him, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. That's not much to ask. And we benefit so much.

We make time to pray to Him. He asks us to pray to Him constantly. We have the Mass, the greatest prayer; we have the Liturgy of the Hours, second greatest prayer only to the Mass; we have devotionals like the Rosary, the Divine Chaplet of Mercy and many, many others. And we have the simplest and most powerful word of prayer, the name of Jesus. Just saying His name is a prayer.

Jesus. Just say His name and at that moment, remember Him; remember that He is among us always. Remember that He was born

one of us. Remember that He died for each and every one of us.

Remember that He is interceding for us to God the Father.

Remember that He is praying for us, whether we are saying His name or not. Jesus.

Talent. What is talent? It is different for each one of us. It's what we are good at. I'm good with numbers and machines. I know how to fix things. What are you good at? Some are good with tools; some are good with people; some are better with children than adults; some are better with adults than children.

Some are good with words; some are good with animals; some are good with art; some are good with cleaning; some are good with food.

We are all good at many and different things. It's what makes us special. It's what makes us good. All because of God.

Whatever we do, whatever we are good at, we can choose to do things for God. We can choose to do things for each other. We can choose to do good for making the world a better place. That's all that

God wants of us. In doing so, we are happy, happier than when we do things that make the world not so good.

But what about those other people, not you, them, those not here, that make the world not so good. That's a real problem. But guess what; just as God gave each of us free will and will not force us to use the gifts that He gave us for good, neither can we force others to be good. All we can do is ask God to bless them and grant them peace and bless us to be a good example of what Jesus taught us; love God and love our neighbor as ourselves.

It is up to us to make the world a better place.

What can you do to make the world a better place?

What can I do to make the world a better place?

What gifts are we going to bring to Jesus?