



Daily Reflections

January 6, 2019

Scripture

Matthew 2: 1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
in the days of King Herod,
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?

We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this,
he was greatly troubled,
and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,
He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea,
for thus it has been written through the prophet:

And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the magi secretly
and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said,
"Go and search diligently for the child.

When you have found him, bring me word,

that I too may go and do him homage."
After their audience with the king they set out.
And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,
until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.
They were overjoyed at seeing the star,
and on entering the house
they saw the child with Mary his mother.
They prostrated themselves and did him homage.
Then they opened their treasures
and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,
they departed for their country by another way.

Our Scripture Reflection

Today's special Feast of the Holy Innocents takes place within the Christmas season and can leave you wondering: "Why such a sad scripture reading to reflect upon especially during such a joyous time of the year?" Because St. Matthew wants to let us know that the Baby who will one day usher in the Kingdom of God will face fierce opposition. He will one day suffer and die for our sins. Already as an infant He, while still in His Mother's arms faces the impact of evil in the forms of hatred, envy and jealousy. Although the wicked King Herod has everything money could possibly buy, he wants no rivals. In his mind, the newborn King must perish. Tragically, it will cost the lives of thousands of little ones, innocent ones to protect his power.

Food for your Journey

When I was 29, an electrical short circuit in my aluminum kitchen ceiling wires started a fire. I awoke with a start at 5:30 am to the sound of crackling. Was I dreaming? NO! YIKES!! FIRE!!!

After the carnage, most of my possessions were in a giant, splintered heap under my third-story one-bedroom apartment window. As part of the aftermath, I made a list of everything destroyed in the apartment (in which I had lived for over 5 years), for insurance reimbursement and tax loss purposes. I was honest in the accounting (I thought that God was angry enough). The replacement cost for everything I had lost came to ... \$65,000. Holy cow! How was it possible that furniture, towels, clothes, books, jewelry,

silverware, etc. could have come to that much? I only had \$10,000 in insurance, since any New Yorker expects burglary, but nobody ever seriously expects a fire.

STUFF! STUFF!! Do you have any idea how much you have spent on stuff? Do you ever add it up? How much stuff do you really need? How much is to satisfy an impulse, how much for status and display? How much do you pay for with credit - a euphemism for debt?

The opportunity cost of stuff is immense. Not only does debt (especially credit card debt) cost a lot (up to 18% per year), but the money is not available to invest and compound. At a conservative 8% compounding per year, stuff bought with credit will cost 26% more than its actual price for every year you carry it on your credit card!"

- "Stuff! Stuff! (and debt),"

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, When I read the story about the Holy Innocents my heart is saddened for them and for the 4000 babies a day who are slaughtered each day in my country because of a "choice". Lord, may I use my time and talent to work against the slaughter of innocent human life in the coming year. May I live to see the day when the killing of innocent life comes to an end. Amen