

# The Epiphany of the Lord

January 2, 2022

From the desk of Fr. Paulo...

## Mele Kalikimaka meke HAU 'OLI MAKAHIKI HOU!

We confidently enter the **New Year 2022** as a Parish Ohana of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel entrusting our spiritual and temporal needs through the intercessions of Mary the Mother of God!

**Year 2021** has been a challenge to say the least, we as pastors of Windward Vicariate all felt that somewhere during the **Covid-19 Pandemic**, many of us Catholic Christians “**got disconnected with our precious Faith.**” It is not that “**we have lost our Faith,**” rather it is that somewhere “**we lost that specialness we had deep within – the inner desire to be connected to God in a tangible way. Something special of the heart**” especially as expressed through the personal presence in the Lord’s Day and in the reception of the Holy Eucharist in person.

Many priests felt and voiced the opinion that “**the greater fault was perhaps in us the Church leaders overall,**” somehow failing to convey **the pre-eminent importance** of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist which is given to us in the Holy Mass.

When we glance back at the condition of our families, the state, the nation, and the world through the lens of all that has happened in 2021 we can notice with some common sense that all was not well.

Could It be that God had been deleted in our culture-nation, that we continued in the path that fail to realize left to ourselves we cannot find the solutions? That our nation’s many moral choices – laws not only contradict the Gospel teachings, but were even diabolical?

But now as we enter the **New Year 2022** and just as the proverbial saying goes, “**don’t cry over the spilled milk,**” rather than regretting over and over where we failed, I believe that **we must step forward boldly and renew our Faith in Jesus Christ in and through the assistance of Mary the Mother of God** as we are given the grace opportunity by God to begin anew our faith journey.

Let us with intentionality, that is to act on purpose in revisiting our precious **Catholic Christian Faith** and all that we hold dear, from the Holy Sacrifice of Mass on Sunday - the Lord’s Day (Saturday Vigil & Sunday) to the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the Sacraments, Marian Devotions and finally the 10 Commandments given to us as sure path to heaven.

This **Year2022** let us make simple yet momentous resolution to live a life worthy of our call as baptized Catholic Christians, to seek to be holy and if we find that our present life is in contradiction – in grave sin, to the truth of the Gospel, then we be courageous enough to bend our knees and pray and ask God to give us the grace to make it right for God will assist us.

**“And if my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my presence and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and revive their land,” 2 Chronicles 7:14.**

May we never take eternal life, that is the life to be with and to share in the **Love of the Triune God** (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) for all eternity for granted. May we be imbued – inspired with the awareness that we can gain or lose our priceless redemption purchased by the blood of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) by the choices we make in this brief and fleeting earthly life.

Have a blessed week in the Lord!

Fr. Paulo ofm cap

## **LOOKING AHEAD:**

### **Month of January, Eucharistic Adoration - Tuesday, January 4th. 8:30am Mass**

9:00am – 10:00am	10:00am – 11:00am	11:00am – 12:00noon
12:00noon – 1:00pm	1:00pm – 2:00pm	2:00pm – 3:00pm
3:00pm – 4:00pm (Closing - Benediction)		

## **Mass Schedule:**

**Monday** January 3<sup>rd</sup> 7:00am

**Tuesday** January 4<sup>th</sup> (See Above)

**Wednesday**, January 5<sup>th</sup> 7:00am

**Thursday** January 6<sup>th</sup> 7:00am

**Friday**, January 7<sup>th</sup> 7:00am and Homebound Visitations 9:30am – 1:00pm

**Saturday**, January 8<sup>th</sup> 7:00am Mass 3:30pm – 4:00pm Confessions 4:30pm Vigil Mass

**Sunday**, January 9<sup>th</sup> Baptism of the Lord 7:00am, 8:30am and 10:00am Masses

## **Our Prayers and Condolences to Frances and Padeken Ohana**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Death Anniversary of +Clement Padeken - January 2, 2022**

Eternal Rest Grand Unto **+Clement** O Lord, and Perpetual Light Shine Upon Him, May **+Clement's** Soul and the Souls of All the Faithful Departed in the Mercy of God, Rest in Peace, Amen.

## **Short Summarization of the Solemn Feast of Mary the Mother of God and Scripture Reflections on**

### **Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God - January 1, 2022**

What privilege and honor that we as Catholic Christians are called to look to Mary the Mother of God and to invoke her as our mother!

On this **New Year's Day, January 1, 2022**, enter the year with the Solemn Feast of Mary the Mother of God. This morning at 9:00am we heard at the First Holy Mass of the Year 2022, in the Word of God proclaimed to us from **I Numbers 6: 22-27** (1<sup>st</sup> Reading), what God intended to bestow upon us, **"The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"**

St. Paul realizing to what extend God has blessed and made us His heirs as sons and daughters - children of God, tells us also just as he did to the Galatian Christian converts; **"As proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' So, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir, through God."** Galatians 4: 6 – 7.

Truly how we like the shepherds in the field tending to the flock were privileged to be called by the angel (God) to go to Bethlehem to adore the newborn child, Jesus Christ, we who have been baptized were also given the call.

While theirs was to come and adore ours is to be made the sons and daughters of God by the call we have received in baptism!

Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord, yet in great humility came upon us for he was found in a lowly abode, **"...and the infant lying in the manger...And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."** Luke 2: 16 – 19.

Would not Mary who reflected all that has taken as a Mother of Jesus Christ also look upon us kindly with maternal countenance, we who are the children of God and always be there to assist us? On this wonderful Feast, Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, we turn to you Mother!

## **Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord**

### **Scripture Reflections**

#### **Old Testament: Isaiah 60: 1-6**

##### **Background Context.**

Prophet Isaiah\* (\*Second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. witnessed the collapsed of Northern kingdom Israel and Jerusalem - Judah in 701 B.C) here is trying to uplift and encourage the exiled Israelites in Babylon by foretelling - prophesying the glorious future of the new Jerusalem which is not yet rebuilt (Jerusalem laid waste-destroyed). The special radiance and the mercy of God will illuminate it. Gentiles, those who once despised Jerusalem – the Lord will bring their riches to it. From East and West all peoples will flock to it.

**Glory of the Lord shines upon you:** The gloom of sadness and despair which enveloped the derelict – devastated Jerusalem during the Jewish Babylonian Exile will give way to a heavenly glory and brightness, for God will dwell within it once more in the Temple.

**See the darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds covers the people but upon you the Lord shines:** This divine brightness – glory is first and foremost for the Chosen People, Jews who will return and receive the promised Messiah.

**Nations shall walk by your light and kings by your shining radiance:** The Gentiles (non-Jews) will partake of this divine glory and blessing; their kings (Magi) will come to share in the light of Zion.

**They all gather and come to you; your sons come from afar:** The glory of Jerusalem will be such that all nations – peoples will be drawn and come to it, and the scatted – dispersed children of Israel will return home.

**The riches of the sea shall be brought to you:** The nations of the West, the costal nations of the sea, will bring their riches in ships.

**Bearing gold and frankincense:** Perhaps two of the most valuable means of barter-trading of the ancient time will be brought forth.

**And proclaiming the praises of the Lord:** The Gentiles (Magi) will come with their gifts to honor the God of Israel - Messiah, by forsaking, and abandoning their false pagan idols for the true God of Israel.

## **New Testament: Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6**

### **Background Context.**

**The stewardship of God's grace:** St. Paul, writing from a prison in Rome to the Ephesian Christians, whom he had converted to Christianity about **53 – 56 A.D.** he reminds the Ephesian Christians of the fact that he was **“the Apostles of the Gentile.”**

**That was given to me for your benefit:** This mission, that is St. Paul to go amongst the Gentiles, to bring the knowledge of Jesus Christ he counted as a special grace and privilege from his Ephesian Christian converts (**Romans 1: 5; 15:15; Galatians 2:9**).

**Namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation:** St. Paul's mission to the Gentiles was revealed to him when Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus (knocked down from his horse and received the revelation) (**Acts 9:15; 22: 21**).

**It was not made known to people in other generations:** The expected Messiah of the Old Testament was understood or assumed to be for the Jews only, the Chosen People, this was the common opinion of the Jewish people. Even the prophets, many of whom referred to the Gentiles in relation to the coming of the Messiah, had no clear understanding of the truth that Jesus Christ-Messiah came for all peoples, for all nations.

**As it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:** That Jesus Christ the Messiah had come for the Gentiles (non-Jews) as well as for the Jews was revealed to the Apostles and prophets, those Christians whom in the early Church had special revelations from God for the good of the early Church – Christian community. We recalled that to the Apostles Jesus Christ gave the command after his Resurrection: **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,”** (**Matthew 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; 24; 47**).

**That Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, copartners:** The Gentiles (non-Jews) are equal members of the Christian Church with the Jewish converts in the mystical body of Christ, the Church.

**In the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel:** The eternal life promised by Jesus Christ to his disciples - followers in the Gospel, and through living up to the teachings they have been given.

## **Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12**

### **Background Context.**

**Magi:** The term was usually reserved for men learned in the sciences, and among the Persians these were especially the priestly caste.

**From the East:** From Mesopotamia, of which Persian was the only country of any importance then.

**To Jerusalem:** Evidently God had revealed to the Magi that a new King of the Jews had been born, and Magi understood from God that he was a special King; Magi did not come when Herod or Herod's son was born.

**We saw the star at its rising and have come to pay him homage:** Astrology was one of the sciences studied by Magi. In the ancient time especially among the pagan world, there was a prevailing and firm conviction that each human being had his own star and that his fate in life was governed by that star. This was not and his not so, but God made use of their superstition to teach them truth. Some unusual light in the sky aroused their interest, God did the rest.

**When king Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled:** King Herod knew the Magi had not come to honor his son, all his sons were grown up at the time of the arrival of the Magi so he immediately thought of an opponent, a threat to his throne who would oust him.

**And all of Jerusalem with him:** Not because King Herod might lose his throne, but for fear of what excess king Herod would go to if any opposition arose.

**Christ was to be born:** King Herod, who was a pagan, he was a Roman client king of Judea may have had some idea of the Messianic promises which were at the heart of the Old Testament. But when the question of a special king of the Jews arose, some of his household must have told him that this must be the expected Messiah.

**Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people:** Ironically the chief priests and scribes knew their Scripture even as they never looked forward to the promise of the coming of the Messiah; they remembered especially the prophecy of prophet Michah and so informed king Herod that Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of the Messiah.

**Time the star appeared:** King Herod had already made his plans; he would destroy that infant. The Magi had probably spent months on their journey. The star they followed may have appeared some months before they left. The infant would possibly be a year or two year old. But king Herod took no chances: when ordering the murder of all the male children of Bethlehem he stated: **“from two years and under.” Matthew 3: 16.**

**Go and search diligently for the child. When you found him, bring the word, that I too may go and do him homage:** King Herod may have deceived the Magi but could not deceive God.

**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:** This heavenly light directs the Magi to the place. They entered the house where they found the Child.

**They saw the child with Mary his Mother:** The omission of Joseph may be due to the simple fact that he was absent because he had found employment in Bethlehem as a carpenter. It is, however, more likely that Matthew who has already (**Matthew 1: 18- 25**) told of the virginal conception of Christ, is emphasizing here the fact that Joseph was only the foster father of Christ.

**They prostrated themselves and did him homage:** That is, they paid him reverence prostrating themselves before him.

**Offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh:** precious gifts to show their respect and esteem.

**And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way:** King Herod had told them to return to him, but God told not via Jerusalem but by another route. This gave time for Joseph to remove the child Jesus.

## **Application to Life.**

The Magi are the central characters in today's Feast of Epiphany. They were non-Jews who did not know the true God of the Jews. Yet that true God revealed – made known to the Magi that the Messiah that God had promised the Jews had come. The long-expected Messiah - King was born in the city of David, Bethlehem as foretold by the prophets.

The Magi initially came to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, naturally assuming and expecting, to find in the Messiah there, for the Temple was also located. Instead, the Magi encountered and found suspicion from the king Herod and his cohorts, hidden yet obvious hatred about the **“great news”** from the reigning king Herod, a hatred which turned to murder of innocents when king Herod discovered that the Magi did not return to Jerusalem.

Among the religious leaders, the chief priests and scribes the Magi found knowledge of their history, for they were versed in the Scriptures but ironically with utter indifference as regards the present and the future of the Messiah.

King Herod and these religious leaders knew the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, through the prophets. They realized that the Magi were certain of the truth revealed to them, though only through the external signs in the sky, the star that shone brightly guiding them. Indeed the Magi would not have come such a long journey on a “ **in ignorance.**”

Despite all that, the desire of joining them to go to Bethlehem with the Magi never entered their evil minds. These were likely the same religious leaders, chief priests, scribes and pharisees who years later would refuse to listen and accept Jesus Christ and this in spite of Jesus’ miracles, and totally refused to admit Jesus’ claim that he was not only the promised Messiah, but truly the Son of God.

Tragically these were the men who mainly rejected Jesus Christ in jealousy and resentment because Jesus showed mercy on sinners and spoke of an eternal life, heaven for those who would repent from sin and accept him. What these chief priests, scribes and pharisees wanted from their Messiah was political power and earthly power - pleasure and prosperity, not what Jesus Christ came to give as a Savior.

Like king Herod these religious leaders ended with rejection of their Savior and condemned him to cruel death by the crucifixion. Yet ironically place on the Cross on which Jesus was crucified, the sign that was boldly written “**King of the Jews**” for all to see.

We are truly blessed to have the knowledge of the Gospels (St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John) which contained the very words spoken by Jesus Christ and of the many amazing Epistles written by St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. Jude and St. James.

Truly Jesus Christ, his mission, his presence, and eternal life won for us are clearly handed on to us.

Yet we too like the leaders of the Jews of his day, we too can take the path of being absorbed in the affairs of this life in the quest for wealth, pleasure, and power and become complaisant, and like them to reject eternal life.

How many Christians have become so totally absorbed in the world as to have little or neither the interest nor the time to for our Lord Jesus Christ? That in our hearts and in our homes Jesus Christ and his teachings are no longer welcome and seen as burdensome?

On this Feast of Epiphany, we look at the Magi and learn simple but important life lessons in faith.

1. Even as Magi had to travel such a distance and to struggle to find the newborn King, they persisted and found him. We too must learn to be persistent in living our faith and not fall at the wayside on our life's challenging journey of faith. Like them let us have the willingness to go beyond our comfort to seek and to find Jesus Christ. What tenacity and resolve they possessed to do the right thing. That their striving **"to do the right thing"** be our model and to be led to where Jesus Christ is found.
2. In our daily life we offer Jesus Christ our King and Savior our most precious Gift our Life, symbolized by **Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh** what the Magi brought to Jesus Christ.
3. **Gold** - all that we have and are, that is to live intentionally day by day to embrace Jesus Christ and all His teachings. **Frankincense** – our life's countless sacrifices in following Jesus Christ to be a genuine disciple. **Myrrh** – that we do not fear of the **"many little dying to self"** that we must do in being a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ today.
4. How ironic and truly tragic were the chief priests, the scribes and king Herod, for they possessed the knowledge through the Scriptures of the truth of the Messiah's arrival yet had no intention to adore or accept the Lord. How truly ironic and tragic it would be for us Christians who are baptized, received Holy Eucharist, and Confirmed, yet even with all these graces abandon God, that is to live in contradiction to the Gospel taught by Jesus Christ.
5. **"The Magi return to their country by another way."** Lesson is clear, that once we come to know the truth and understand it, we cannot remain in darkness. There is a popular Christian song by Crowder, **"Come as you are"** lyrics speak of the mercy and love of God, inviting us all to come as you are, yet truth be told, upon encountering Jesus Christ we are not to remain in the old.

Let us come to our senses and though we may have strayed from God, let us never cease to return to God and leave behind the old ways of sin. Like the Magi we must return by another path, that is to become the children of God that we are.

**“Do you not know, or have you not heard? The Lord is the eternal God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint nor grow weary, and his knowledge is beyond scrutiny.” Isaiah 40:28.**