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### The Epiphany of the Lord

Today, the ancient prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in Christ the Lord:

"Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears his glory" (Isaiah 60:1-2).

It is this glory that the Magi from the East see in the heavens and follow all the way to Bethlehem. These three men who for years searched the heavens and whose hearts longed and groaned for the Savior of mankind, stood before Herod and implored him: "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen his star at its rising and have come to do him homage" (Matthew 2:2). Today, in these Magi, the prophecy of the Psalmist is fulfilled: "All nations shall pay him homage, all nations shall serve him" (Psalm 72:11).

Who among us does not look for the Savior? Who among us does not search with great longing and expectation for the fulfillment of his or her desires and dreams? The wise men sought the same as we: they yearned for peace, for happiness, for a life of meaning and purpose. They saw the glory of the newborn King of heaven and earth and they went in haste to worship and adore him.

But when they arrived in Bethlehem they certainly did not see what they expected. They went first to Herod's palace because a king should always be found in a place of power and authority, and yet the newborn king was not to be found here, but in a cave that served as a stable. While in Cologne, Germany for this past World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI said this of the Magi:

The new King, to whom they now paid homage, was quite unlike what they were expecting. In this way they had to learn that God is not as we usually imagine him to be. This is where their inner journey began (Address at Youth Vigil, 20 August 2005).

As they fell down and paid homage to the Child-King they looked upon the fulfillment of all of their hopes and dreams and longings, but at the same time they knew that their own lives and points of view must change. The power they first sought is not the power that will fulfill them or save them. They found not earthly power, but heavenly humility.

When we, like the Magi, kneel down for Christ the Lord we will realize the same. When we worship him "in spirit and in truth" we will recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of all of our longings and at the same time we will realize that God is not what we expected.

So often when we look to God we look to him for a show of his power and his grandeur. This is what brought the Magi into the presence of Jesus at Bethlehem. They looked for a kingly

power greater than that of any other king and what they found was quite the opposite. Pope Benedict put it this way:

[Jesus] contrasts the noisy and ostentatious power of this world with the defenseless power of love, which succumbs to death on the Cross, and dies ever anew throughout history; yet it is this same love which constitutes the new divine intervention that opposes injustice and ushers in the Kingdom of God. God is different - this is what they come to realize. And it means that they themselves must now become different, they must learn God's ways (Address at Youth Vigil, 20 August 2005).

We, too, must also become different; we must change our ways when faced with so great a power, when faced with the power of love.

When the Magi returned to the East they did not forget the King who received them. They did not forget the gifts they gave to him which foreshadowed all that he would do. They did not forget that they had to change their lives. In kneeling down before him, the Magi humbly invited Jesus into their hearts and pledged their lives in service to him. They learned his lesson of love and carried this lesson with them to the end of their days.

Where the Magi sought wealth, they learned the riches of poverty. Where the Magi sought power, they learned the strength of vulnerability. Where the Magi sought life, they learned that eternal life comes only through a sharing in the cross of Christ.

In short, they came to realize that, as our Holy Father reminds us,

It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true. True revolution consists in simply turning to God who is the measure of what is right and who at the same time is everlasting love. And what could ever save us apart from love (Address at Youth Vigil, 20 August 2005)?