Epiphany 2021 R

MDP of God

We have just heard the story of the Magi traveling *to come* **kneel** before the baby Jesus

They came a **great distance** to do that - *the question one might ask is* **Why?**

You might answer well Jesus is God and they wanted to prostrate themselves before God

*But the fact is* **God is everywhere - right?**

They could have stayed in Midian, or Ephah or Sheba or wherever they happened to be from and still talked to God - right?

You can pray anywhere

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So Why did they make that journey *that probably took months*?

And remember, travel wasn't easy then - they didn't just get on a plane

They traveled through the dessert with the hot sun beating down on them - anyone whose ever been to Nevada or Arizona knows how **oppressive** the heat in the dessert can be - and those camels weren't air conditioned

They would have crossed mountains - they would have faced the possibility of robbers

Add to that much of the world had heard about **crazy** King Herod, about **all the people** he had killed [including a few of his own sons] - **why** *would they risk* going near that lunatic?

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After all, *they never saw any miracles* - they never saw the angels *like the shepherds did*- when they got there **all they saw** *was a baby in His Mother’s arms*

Why didn't they just sit at home and pray? - *Since God is everywhere*

The answer of course is that while it's true that God is everywhere -He **manifests** Himself **in more tangible ways** at different times and places.

For instance, in the Old Testament when Moses first encounters God at the burning bush---God tells Him to remove His sandals because he was standing on holy ground [God’s everywhere—but that encounter was unique…]

Or when the Israelites were in the desert-God would appear in the cloud over the tent of meeting

Whenever He did manifest Himself in the way - the Israelites would say to Moses - "You go for us - *we'll just stay* in our own tents"

*They got a glimpse* of the glory of God ***and it scared them***

So their experience of God **at that time and place** *was far more* ***tangible*** *then say their experience of God when as slaves they were building a pyramid for Pharaoh*

The experience of God *that the Apostles* had as they sat at the Last Supper with Jesus - *was a far greater* encounter with the Lord then when you're at McDonald's ordering a Big Mac.

In the book of Revelation when the Apostle John sees Jesus in all His glory in heaven

*Remember this is holy St. John*

This is the one who sat **right next to Jesus** at the Last Supper - *the only apostle* who didn't flee and stood at the foot of the cross with Mary

So when holy St. John ---*when he sees Jesus in all His glory in heaven* - **how does he respond?**

Does he say, Hey, Jesus, long time no see? - Jesus, give me five?

**No -** *He falls down as though dead before Jesus in all His glory*

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So John's encounter with God - John's experience of God at that moment - God's manifesting of Himself to John in heaven---***Was a far greater*** - was a far more **tangible encounter** then when he was fishing with his dad Zebedee before Jesus had called him to be an apostle.

God is everywhere, **but our encounter with God***, our experience of God* - The way **God manifests Himself** to us is far different at different times and different places

So, why did the Magi face the heat of the dessert? Why did the Magi travel for months to kneel before a baby? Why did the Magi face the possibility of robbers and cross mountains and risk coming close to crazy King Herod?

Because ***the only place in all the world*** where they could be in the presence of God in the flesh - they could **physically** see God in the flesh - they could touch and hold in their own arms God in the flesh

Was in Bethlehem of Judea

**In fact** *this was the first time in human history* **when God** *could be found in the flesh* - when God had taken on a human body - when God could be physically seen // - when God could be touched - when God *could be held in someone's arms*

*So the question is*: **Does seeing God in the flesh matter?**

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*Is that* **body** *that God took on important*? After all the physical doesn't matter does it?--------**Wrong!**

That body being nailed to the cross was essential for our salvation

That blood that was spilt by Jesus is what washes away our sins and gives us the hope of eternal life

**God in the flesh is what saves us**

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So the Holy Spirit inspired the Magi **to desire** to come into the physical presence of God

The Holy Spirit moved them **to desire** *to physically bring gifts* to God in the flesh - to prostrate themselves before God in the flesh - to worship God **physically present** in our world [ for the first time - at that point in history]

The reason I bring all this up is that today we often hear people say things like, "God is everywhere - I don't need to go to Church to pray."

^^^ I don't have to go to an adoration chapel to kneel before God.

I can pray in my room - I can pray between shots on the golf course - as I walk through the woods - while I'm fishing - at the Indians game or the Brown's game - ***anywhere***

*And that's true*, you don't have to come to Church to pray - an adoration chapel to kneel before God - // He is everywhere

But to come into the presence of the **physical body** of Christ - the body that was nailed to a cross- that rose from the dead and ascended into heaven

To come into the presence of the **physical blood** of Christ - the blood that washes away our sins and makes us pleasing to the Father

Your not going to find that on most golf courses or fishing holes - as you lay in bed or walk through the woods or go to a football game or go shopping or while you're cooking dinner

But you will find Jesus in the flesh - body, blood, soul and divinity in every Catholic Church in the world

You will find God in the flesh in our adoration chapel

Like the Magi, we can kneel before God in the flesh

^^^ we can see God in the flesh

^^^ we can touch Him and hold Him and just be in His presence

And even beyond what the Magi did - *we can receive Him* - His body and blood will enter into us at this Mass to transform us - to help us grow in holiness - so that the life of Jesus can grow in us.

The awesomeness of what God allows us to do - of the privileges we have *are beyond words*.

My friends—we often take God’s greatest gifts for granted

As we contemplate the sacrifices that the Magi made to come into the presence of God in the flesh

Let’s open our eyes to the greatest gift in all the world—our Lord Jesus Christ who loves you and me so much—that He shares His very life with us in the holy Eucharist