

AN "EPIPHANY" IS AN APPEARANCE. In today's readings, with their rising stars, splendorous lights, and mysteries revealed, the face of the child born on Christmas day appears.

In the Gospel, Herod asks the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah is to be born. The answer says much more, combining two strands of Old Testament promise—one revealing the Messiah to be from the line of David, the other predicting "a ruler of Israel" who will "shepherd his flock" and whose "greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth". His kingdom, we sing, will stretch "to the ends of the earth," and the world's kings will pay Him homage. The nations stream from the East, bearing "gold and frankincense" for Israel's king.

The Magi's pilgrimage in today's Gospel marks the fulfillment of God's promises. The Magi are following the star that Balaam predicted would rise along with the ruler's staff over the house of Jacob. Laden with gold and spices, their journey evokes those made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba. One greater than Solomon is here. He has come to reveal that all peoples are "co-heirs" of the royal family of Israel.

His manifestation forces us to choose: will we follow the signs that lead to Him as the wise Magi did? Or will we be like those priests and scribes who let God's words of promise become dead letters on an ancient page?

*Fr. Michael Jeeva Antony*



"EPIFANÍA" ES MANIFESTACIÓN-PRESENTACIÓN. En las lecturas de hoy, con estrellas relucientes, luces esplendorosas, y misterios revelados, el rostro del niño recién nacido en Navidad apareció.

En el Evangelio, Herodes pregunto a los Maestros de la Ley y a los escribas que donde nacería el Mesías. La respuesta diría mucho más, combinando dos promesas del Viejo Testamento – una revelando que el Mesías seria del linaje de David, la otra prediciendo "un gobernante de Israel" quien "pastorearía su rebaño" y que su "grandeza alcanzaría los confines de la tierra". Su Reino, cantamos, se estrechara "a los confines de la tierra", y los reyes del mundo le darían homenaje. Las naciones fluirán desde el Este, llevando "oro e incienso" al Rey de Israel.

La peregrinación de los magos en el Evangelio de hoy, marca el cumplimiento de las promesas de Dios. Los Magos están siguiendo la estrella que Balaam predijo que una estrella se levantaría junto con el jefe sobre la casa de Jacob. Cargados con oro y especias, su jornada evoca aquellos regalos hechos a Salomón por la Reina de Sheba. Uno más grande que Salomón está aquí. Él ha venido para revelar que todos somos "co-herederos" de la familia real de Israel.

Su manifestación nos forza a elegir: seguiremos nosotros las señales que nos llevan a Jesús como a los Magos? O seremos como aquellos sacerdotes y escribas quienes dejaron que las palabras de Dios de la promesa se convirtieran en cartas muertas en una página antigua?

*Padre Miguel Jeeva Antony*



## INTERFAITH EMERGENCY SHELTER JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> (MONDAY) TO 27<sup>TH</sup> (SUNDAY)

The Shelter now has a new “home”, at 4060 W. Amazon Parkway (corner of Amazon and Fox Hollow), called the First Place Annex! What does this mean? The families participating in the Emergency Shelter no longer have to uproot themselves every week, and travel between the different churches. For the individual parishes/churches acting as ‘hosts’, it means providing dinner and evening activities at the Annex. Carpooling from St. Mark to the Annex will be available, and food items parishioners have prepared at home will also be transported (main cooking will be done at the Annex). Volunteer sign-ups, in the vestibule, will be the week-ends of: January 5/6, 12/13, and 19/20. For more info, call Tom Shea at: 541-998-8648.

### OPEN HOUSES AT LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS!

*Faith-based education where students are known, challenged, and given the tools to be successful!*

**Marist High School:** Preview Day on **January 12<sup>th</sup>** (Saturday) **1pm** — register at **12:30pm**, or online at: [www.marisths.org](http://www.marisths.org).

**O’Hara School:** Open House on **January 27<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday) **11am—1:00pm** — register online at: [www.oharaschool.org](http://www.oharaschool.org)

**St. Paul School:** Open House on **January 27<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday) **11:30am—1:30pm**... for info call 541-344-1401



The **CARMELITE AUXILIARY** exists to help our cloistered Carmelite sisters, at the Carmel of Maria Regina on Greenhill Road. It is open to all women of the parish, and the next meeting is at 10:00am, on **January 14<sup>th</sup>**. *Come join us, and learn how we help our Carmelites!*

### FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

#### DEATH PENALTY CONSIDERINGS ...

Was God’s ancient commandment “You shall not kill” (Ex 20:13) understood as an absolute statement, forbidding any taking of human life? Apparently not, since the same divine law called for the death penalty (Lv 20:2-21,27).

For this reason, the Catholic Church reads the commandment against killing in the light of other biblical passages that specify its meaning: “The innocent and the just you shall not put to death, for I will not acquit the guilty” (Ex 23:7). The commandment thus forbids the taking of innocent life; execution of criminals might be another matter.

Of course, Christians are not obliged to practice all of the Old Testament laws (Gal 3:23-25). Nor, when the contemporary state punishes crimes censured in the Old Testament, must we demand that it impose as severe a penalty as God required of the ancient Israelites (Jn 7:53—8:11). Nevertheless, the Church has traditionally allowed for the possibility of capital punishment for extremely serious crimes.

Why? Because societies may legitimately defend themselves — just as individuals may — and the defense of the common good depends upon rendering an unjust aggressor incapable of harming others. And such a defense may be not only a right but even a grave duty for public officials who are responsible to protect the lives of other (Rom 13:3-4). So, must the aggressor be put to death in order to be rendered incapable of harm? The Catechism (No. 2267) explains:

Assuming that the guilty party’s identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people’s safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person.

Today, in fact, ... the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity “are very rare, if not practically non-existent” (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* 56).

**RECOMMENDED READING:** Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible

Mt 5:22-26; 12:32 · 1 Cor 3:11-15; 6:9-10 · Gal 5:19-21 · Eph 5:5 ·

& Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 1472-1475 · 1852-1867 · 1873-1876 ·