

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“The magi prostrated themselves before the child and did him homage. They opened their treasures and offered him gold, frankincense and myrrh.”

Matthew 2: 11

One of the most common of human experiences is to be present among family or friends when there is a new mom and dad and a tiny baby. Everyone is captivated by the scene and looks at the tiny child and the perfection in fingernails and eyelashes and a sleeping countenance. Enthralled at the new life given despite our failures and sins. God never gives up on us. I wonder how many newborns you have seen in your lifetime. How many have you held or fed or burped or nestled? Each newborn has this capacity to captivate us even if for a moment.

But those magi from the East. How many babes had they seen in their lifetime and in their travels? What is different with this one? Don't all newborns look the same? But then there were the shepherds who were confronted with angels singing in the fields. Then there was Simeon in the Temple who lifts the child and proclaims, “Now Lord you may dismiss your servant for my eyes have seen the glory of the Lord and the salvation of your people Israel.” This child—there was just something about this child—and there would be that reaction to Jesus all throughout his life. For some the encounter with Jesus itself was enough. For others not so. For the Magi, it was all they needed. They prostrated themselves. Have you ever? I have. On my ordination day I prostrated myself on the floor of the sanctuary of the Cathedral before Christ the Living God in the Blessed Sacrament. Then on each Good Friday I prostrate myself in the sanctuary before the Christ about to be offered up on the cross in sacrifice.

Do you ever realize when you actually do Christ homage? Why not think about it? Why not recognize the living God and dare to place yourself in a position of homage before the Christ of God? It is an amazing thing to do so. It changes you. You begin to know who you are—and who God is. Wouldn't it be a waste to have lived an entire lifetime and not imitated the Magi even once? That is the question of the week.