

The Mystery that has now been revealed

The great feast of the Epiphany really is a sumptuous affair with its exotic imagery and beautiful poetry, none more so than that expressed in today's first reading from Isaiah. This feast has given artists and in particular the artists of the Renaissance, the licence and the opportunity to release all their imaginative skills and to depict this moment as the culmination of a grand and glorious pilgrimage. What they produced in capturing the arrival of these Eastern princes in all their finery at the house in Bethlehem was a snapshot; not just a giving of mysterious gifts, but a handing over of all the splendour and majesty of the human condition as represented by these kings, to the fountain and source of that gift.

Of course every picture tells its own story and none of us can lay claim to living amongst such extravagant backdrops as those drafted by Benozzo Gozzoli and others, nevertheless, each of our lives has its own pattern of experiences and we are all invited to come with those experiences to the light which shines forth from the revelation that lies at the heart of this event. In essence what is taking place is an enrichment which takes the form of an exchange. When we come and partake of this mystery we too are essentially making a pilgrimage. It is a pilgrimage that encompasses our whole life but at the same time it is a pilgrimage that allows us to gather and garner a richness of understanding about ourselves as we proceed along its path. Each week we come to present our gifts, our experiences, to have them enriched and given meaning in the context of our relationship with God and with each other. We may wonder about their relevance, their importance, their significance and in return each week we receive a new experience of revelatory love that sanctifies them and enfolds them into the mystery of God's grace.

It is by opening up our lives to the immensity of this mystery that little by little we begin to glimpse its effect in us and around us. The nature of this effect expresses itself in a myriad of different ways but ultimately it is through revelation that what it means becomes gently yet effectively apparent. It is in the remembrance of a love lived uniquely for each one of us that this revelation takes its hold on us. Bread blessed and broken, wine poured out and shared, insignificant in themselves are empowered through the reality of what they have become. When we accept them into our hands, into our bodies, into our lives, they become transformative and the path we tread becomes a means through which this revelation, this transformation informs all that we are.

This feast of the Epiphany is the invitation once more to start out on our pilgrimage into the mystery of God's love revealed in his son. Each week we will encounter him as he walks with us and shares our highs and lows. Each week he will offer us his body and blood as gift to be received in love. We bring what we have lived, and whether it be exciting or mundane, it is who and what I am, and to him it is treasure, to be honoured and respected and to be offered as sacrament. This becomes our means of encounter, our words, our poetry, our image of the potential that lies within each of us. He becomes the backdrop, the canvass on which the story of our lives is depicted, a rich tapestry of unlimited love offering us a unique insight into *the mystery that has now been revealed*.