

## EPIPHANY

1. Today God reveals himself to nations
  - a. Jesus has become flesh to save not just Israel but world, God is universal not property of a nation
  - b. Different kind of Savior
    - i. Epiphanies of pagan gods imagined to be powerful and frightening
    - ii. Comic book superheroes are similar –
      1. Superman – true identity is superhero, may pretend to be mild mannered Clark Kent
      2. Not who he really is, especially when superman saves somebody, power obvious
    - iii. Revelation of God not showy, rather he reveals himself as vulnerable infant
2. Revealed by visit from people from East who studied the stars
  - a. Saw in stars signs that Savior would be born in Judea, as king of Jews
  - b. Bring mysterious, symbolic gifts
  - c. Gold for king, incense for God, myrrh for dead man
    - i. Gifts foretell and reveal how God has chosen to reveal himself
3. but it takes faith to see this infant as the savior
  - a. Herod's advisors could tell the magi that the infant savior was to be born in Bethlehem
  - b. Send the magi but apparently none of them are convinced that this star really reveals change so that they might accompany them to worship Jesus
  - c. Herod is concerned enough to send soldiers to kill the innocents
  - d. But he was also the type of man who killed his some of his own sons to make sure they would not be rivals
    - i. For Herod killing the innocents was not an expression of faith but an act of prudence
    - ii. Avoid rumors of magi worshipping potential king
4. Recognizing Jesus as Savior requires act of faith
  - a. Followers of Jesus kept asking Him when He would restore Israel to power
5. Instead Jesus becomes king through His death
  - a. his throne is not fancy chair but the wood of the cross
  - b. as king who gives up his life for us, He reveals that He is God through Resurrection
    - i. Resurrection shows his power and love conquers even death
6. the gifts of Magi are symbolic of our own vocation as Christians
  - a. How we interpret the gifts makes a difference with faith
  - b. Gold, incense and expensive spices can be a symbol of lording it over others
    - i. Elitism that demands being served because those who have it are wealthy and powerful
7. With Jesus these gifts are actually burdens requiring great responsibility
  - a. We have called to be one with Jesus in our baptism
  - b. Gold symbolizing wealth demands that we use it to serve needs of God's people not just make ourselves comfortable
    - i. Indeed Jesus warns us that more wealth we have, harder it is to enter kingdom of God
8. Incense reminds us that as Christians we are the body of Christ, in sacraments God adopts us as his children, we are to be holy as God is holy
  - a. But this holiness, the gift of divinity as being one with Jesus does not mean we deserve adoration
  - b. rather through our experiences of suffering, loss and death in our lives, we will find unity with God
9. suffering is necessary road to Resurrection
  - a. experience of suffering can help us to identify with others as they go through pains of life
  - b. mutual sharing of suffering, may see the power of God bring us healing and hope
10. Challenge of the Epiphany of Jesus is to realize that our destiny and purpose is not earthly glory
  - a. Our glory and joy will come in the depth of humility and solidarity with the poor of the world
  - b. We are called to be light in midst of darkness of world
  - c. Also we encourage each other to know that the darkness of world will not destroy us
  - d. Indeed the suffering whether from physical pains or experience of evil can actually be seen as candles in the darkness
  - e. They can be signs to us that we are one with Jesus who went to his death trusting in God's promise
  - f. Just as for Jesus his suffering was vindicated in the resurrection, so we hope that we too will be vindicated by joining in the Resurrection of Jesus.