

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, January 7, 2024
Epiphany of the Lord
Cycle B

One night the King was roused from sleep by fearful stomping on the roof above his bed. Alarmed, he shouted, *"Who's there?"* *"A friend,"* came the reply from the roof. *"I've lost my camel."* Perturbed by such stupidity, the King screamed, *"You fool! Are you looking for a camel on the roof?"* *"You fool!"* the voice from the roof answered. *"Are you looking for God in silk clothing, and lying on a golden bed?"*

We celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. Today's gospel passage talks about the search of the Magi: "Where is the newborn King of the Jews?" "We saw his star at the rising and have come to do him homage."

With Epiphany comes the question: "Where does one look for God?" Where are you looking for God? I think the more basic question which needs to be asked is: What are we really searching for? What is it that we are seeking? Are we not searching for an alternative-God?

Timothy Keller, in his book *Counterfeit Gods*, exposes the idols that people worship – or using the language of today's gospel, "have come to do them homage." People, consciously or unconsciously, are seeking or searching for things other than God. Our hearts *deify* them (make them Gods) as the center of our lives, because, we think, they can give us significance and meaning, safety and security, happiness and satisfaction, fulfillment and completeness, if we attain them.

By the way, what is an idol? An idol is anything more important to you than God...anything that absorbs your heart and preoccupies your mind instead of God...anything you seek to give you what only God can give. According to Keller, a "Counterfeit God" is

anything so central and essential to your life, that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought, without any regard to its consequence.

The idol we are referring to can be material wealth and possessions, success and prosperity, power and influence, fame and vainglory, comfortable circumstances, luxuries and conveniences.

Keller says, "When your meaning in life is to fix someone else's life, we may call it 'co-dependency' but it is really idolatry." "An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, 'If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning...then I'll know I have value and importance...then I'll feel significant and secure'."

There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship. We worship anything we seek to give us what only God can give: significance and meaning, safety and security, happiness and satisfaction, fulfillment and completeness.

We know very well that it is only God who can fulfill our greatest needs; it is only God who can satisfy the deepest desires of our hearts.

St. Augustine says, "Our hearts are made for God, and they will not rest, until they rest in God."

Let us go back to our question: Where are you looking for God? If we are to advance in our spiritual journey and search, we must pay attention to the signs of God's presence in our life, we must open our spiritual eyes to see God in everything.

May today's celebration of the Lord's Epiphany inspire us as we seek Jesus and open ourselves to receive his grace. May it lead us to the King to whom we will devote our lives and everything in us—to know, to love and to serve him.