

Meditation on the Praise of God in relation to the Epiphany

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I am writing this meditation on the Praise of God, early in the morning of January the 4th, two days before the wonderful feast of the Manifestation of the Lord Jesus to the Three Kings (Epiphany). The Spirit has filled my mind and my heart of many holy and beautiful thoughts about the praise of God in relation to this Gospel story, well known by all believers. It is my duty to share these thoughts with you. I am a baker of God and the Lord always gives me fresh bread of the day to be shared with my brothers in faith. Not only it is fresh bread but, it is also "fragrant" because Jesus, according to a beautiful expression of Dionysius the Areopagite, is the "fragrance of God" and we, apostles of Jesus, as St. Paul says (2 Cor 2,14-16) are commissioned to bring not only the bread of God (Jesus) to others, but also the aroma of God (Jesus) to the others. The ancient fathers defined the Confirmation with the charisms of the Spirit Who diffuses the sacrament of the aroma of Christ, poured out on believers. But before the sacraments there is the preaching, and Paul, who was not primarily sent to baptize nor to confirm but to preach Jesus, spread the aroma of God to people by preaching about Jesus.

Well, the first thought that fast like an arrow came to my mind while I was thinking of Epiphany was this. I saw as if the star appeared to the Magi had a name: it was named "The Praise of God". But let us be careful! The star itself was not the Praise of God, but simply pointed and guided to the real Praise of God, the just born Lord Jesus. It is like when we are in the streets of a city and we want to go to the station but we do not know where it is. Suddenly, a road sign appears with written: 'station' and next to it the picture of a running train. We well know that the road sign is not the station, but following the signs we arrive to the real station. So the star "Praise of God" was the road sign given to the Magi from the Most High so they could arrive and kneel before the true Praise of God for all peoples, Jesus , the Savior of all.

Second thought. Imagine the Magi arriving in Jerusalem and instead of saying: "Where is the new born king of the Jews? We have seen his star and have come to worship him", they

say "Where is the just born Praise of God? We have seen his star and have come to worship him". With this thought we see how the star-indicator of the Praise of God leads to the true star of the Praise of God, which is Jesus. Beware! Another terrific thought! As during the day the star "Sun" shines over our head (let us not forget the sun is a star), so God, the infinite Light, has determined that in our spirit the Star Jesus should shine bringing the name written in itself: "The Praise of God". Why does Jesus deserve this name? We will see this at the end. Let us carry on.

We fly over the episode of Herod, to whom we give only the title of "slayer of the Praise of God", the long arm on earth of the supreme killer of the Praise God in heaven and on earth, Satan, the devil.

We arrive together with the Magi by following the indicator-star: "Praise of God" to worship the true Praise of God, who is born for us. We find ourselves before Jesus. What did the Magi do: "*went into the house (which we call the Temple of the Praise of God) and when they saw the child with Mary his mother, they knelt and worshiped him*". Wonderful Wisdom! Supreme Wisdom! Top Science! In that child they worshiped the Life, the One who John, the supremely inspired, called at the beginning of his Gospel: "In Him was life, life which for humans was also light". The wholly celestial star, Jesus, gives light to the world and to people because He is the Life! And Life is given to people in abundance, so that it may become in them salvation that leads to true Life and the true Life in every person who welcome it will transform into Perpetual Praise of God! The more we draw salvation and life from Jesus, the more we become perennial Admirers and Worshipers of God, never tired because our joy becomes the Praise and Worship of God, and there is no greater joy to the spiritual person born of the Spirit, than loving, worshipping and praising God.

It is like when in a city there is a large gold mine. It is available to all and everyone who goes to that mine can, according to their work take from it the gold and take it home. So it is for everyone who comes to Jesus in order to obtain from Him the light of life or a life of light which is the same thing. He always brings more life home, even when suffering with Jesus unto death, even the most terrible death. Everything in Jesus becomes Life and Praise of God, and death is trampled under our feet with all its poisonous and terrible thoughts.

Let us conclude this meditation, thanking the Spirit Who was the main producer of it and let us do like the Three Kings. We draw out from our heart gold, incense and myrrh, which symbolically represent the three theological virtues that when crowning our heads really

make us kings and queens in heaven and on earth. The three theological virtues are faith, hope and love infused in us by the Holy Spirit who works tirelessly to bring us to perfection. He is the great manufacturer of royal crowns for the children of God and, not only He manufactures them, but He also place them on our head, according to the particular type of regality with which He wants us to reign in the kingdom of God, where all its people are kings and queens. Even the least in it is a king or a queen, because they have put death under their feet!

Gold is a symbol of faith with which we very strongly adhere to the Father and to the Son to become one spirit with them.

Incense is the symbol of love, because nothing gives more worship to God than the love of God and neighbor for the love of God, and without this love any other worship to God is without its real life.

The myrrh, the scent with which Jesus was wrapped in his burial, is a symbol of hope in the resurrection, supreme hope that every Christian should have and with which should die to the life of this world.

In this way we honor the Life, Jesus and, by worshiping and honoring Him ceaselessly and obeying its precepts, we ceaselessly draw Life and Light of Life from Him! Thanks be given to God, the Father, who made shine in our hearts the star of celestial Light, His Son Jesus, in whom the fullness of Divinity dwells, source for us of life on life!