

An “epiphany” is an appearance. In today’s readings, with their rising stars, splendorous lights, and mysteries revealed, the face of the child born on Christmas day appears.

In the Gospel, Herod asks the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah is to be born. The answer says much more, combining two strands of Old Testament promise—one revealing the Messiah to be from the line of David, the other predicting “a ruler of Israel” who will “shepherd his flock” and whose “greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth”. His kingdom, we sing, will stretch “to the ends of the earth,” and the world’s kings will pay Him homage. The nations stream from the East, bearing “gold and frankincense” for Israel’s king.

The Magi’s pilgrimage in today’s Gospel marks the fulfillment of God’s promises. The Magi are following the star that Balaam predicted would rise along with the ruler’s staff over the house of Jacob. Laden with gold and spices, their journey evokes those made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba. One greater than Solomon is here. He has come to reveal that all peoples are “co-heirs” of the royal family of Israel.

His manifestation forces us to choose: will we follow the signs that lead to Him as the wise Magi did? Or will we be like those priests and scribes who let God’s words of promise become dead letters on an ancient page?

Fr. Michael Jeeva Antony



OPEN HOUSES AT LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS!

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Marist High School: Preview Day on **January 12th** (Saturday) **1pm** — register at **12:30pm**, or online at: www.marisths.org.

O’Hara School: Open House on **January 27th** (Sunday) **11am—1:00pm** — register online at: www.oharaschool.org

St. Paul School: Open House on **January 27th** (Sunday) **1130am—1:30pm**... for info call 541-344-1401

UPCOMING RETREATS:

RETRouvaille — FIND A NEW BEGINNING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE by attending a Retrouvaille retreat Rediscover yourself, your spouse, and a loving relationship. Retrouvaille is not a spiritual retreat, not a sensitivity group, not a seminar, not a social gathering For confidential information or to register for the **January 18-20 (2019)** weekend, go to: www.helpourmarriage.org or call 1-503-225-9191.

AREA NEWS

The **CARMELITE AUXILIARY** exists to help our cloistered Carmelite sisters, at the Carmel of Maria Regina on Greenhill Road. It is open to all women of the parish, and the next meeting is at 10:00am, on **January 14th**. *Come join us, and learn how we help our Carmelites!*

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS SCHOLARSHIPS: .

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas 2019 **National Education Contest** is open to all students grades 4-12. You may be enrolled in any school or home-schooled to enter. There are two themes (choose one): **"HERE I AM LORD, I COME TO DO YOUR WILL"** (Ps. 40), or **"DOING MY BEST TO DO GOOD"**. For a list of official rules and an entry form ask your parish office or visit the National CDA website: catholicdaughters.org or contact Julia Kelso at cdacourtoregon118@gmail.com. Entries are judged at the local level with first place winners moving to state and then the national level. Entries are due by January 30, 2019.

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas National Scholarship for any **8th grader entering 9th grade at a Catholic High School**. Requirements 1) You must be Catholic. You do NOT have to have a relative who is a CDA member. 2) You must be attending a Catholic High School in the Fall. 3) An essay of approximately 250-300 words typed and doubled-spaced entitled **"HOW WILL I BE COMPASSIONATE AND BRING THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO OTHERS?"** Entries must be postmarked no later than April 1, 2019. For the application/cover sheet and further instructions please visit the National CDA website: catholicdaughters.org

FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

DEATH PENALTY CONSIDERINGS?

Was God's ancient commandment "You shall not kill" (Ex 20:13) understood as an absolute statement, forbidding any taking of human life? Apparently not, since the same divine law called for the death penalty (Lv 20:2-21,27).

For this reason, the Catholic Church reads the commandment against killing in the light of other biblical passages that specify its meaning: "The innocent and the just you shall not put to death, for I will not acquit the guilty" (Ex 23:7). The commandment thus forbids the taking of innocent life; execution of criminals might be another matter.

Of course, Christians are not obliged to practice all of the Old Testament laws (Gal 3:23-25). Nor, when the contemporary state punishes crimes censured in the Old Testament, must we demand that it impose as severe a penalty as God required of the ancient Israelites (Jn 7:53—8:11). Nevertheless, the Church has traditionally allowed for the possibility of capital punishment for extremely serious crimes.

Why? Because societies may legitimately defend themselves — just as individuals may — and the defense of the common good depends upon rendering an unjust aggressor incapable of harming others. And such a defense may be not only a right but even a grave duty for public officials who are responsible to protect the lives of other (Rom 13:3-4). So, must the aggressor be put to death in order to be rendered incapable of harm? The Catechism (No. 2267) explains:

Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person.

Today, in fact, ... the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity "are very rare, if not practically non-existent" (John Paul II, Evangelium vitae 56).

RECOMMENDED READING: Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible
Mt 5:22-26; 12:32 · 1 Cor 3:11-15; 6:9-10 · Gal 5:19-21 · Eph 5:5 ·
& Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 1472-1475 · 1852-1867 · 1873-1876 ·