

Msgr. Bill's Weekly Letter...

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This letter is a repeat for the feast of the Epiphany. The following is from the writings of Fulton Sheen.

Some years ago, W. Gascoyne Cecil recorded his observations on the way art depicts the Three Wise Men. He observed that they were generally represented of different ages. One was old, one middle-aged, and one young. Tradition has it that this belief came from the lips of the great traveler, Marco Polo, who, when he went to Persia, tried to find out all he could about the Wise Men. Finally coming to a little town, he found there a devotion to the Three Kings who had followed a star to worship a great Being born in the West, and their ages were very different,

As Gascoyne Cecil tells the story, when they came to the stable at Bethlehem; they went in one at a time. First went in the old man and instead of finding what he had expected, he found an Old Man who talked with him. He was then followed by the middle-aged man. He was met by a Teacher of his own years who spoke with him. When the young man entered, he, in his turn found a young Prophet.

The three met together outside the stable and marveled — how it was that all three had gone to worship this Being who was just born, and they had not found a Child, but three Men of different ages. The old man had found the Old, the middle-aged the Middle-aged, and the young the Young. Taking their gifts, they all go in together, and are amazed to discover that the Prophet is then a Babe of twelve days old! Each sees separately in Christ the reflection of his own condition. The old man sees the old, the middle-aged the middle-aged, and the young the young. But when they go in together, they see Christ as He is. We shall find in Christ the answers to all our needs, in all the periods of our life.

Perhaps the question today for you, for me, goes, “how do I see Jesus in my heart, mind and will today?” As in the story, how do I allow him to be seen by my inner self? I have the power to say whatever I want to say albeit distorted and out of context.

Since Jesus did not come to save **only me, but the entire human race**, I have a very serious obligation to learn how Jesus joins me with my fellow Catholic so that I am present a true picture to others. The “common good” requires I look beyond myself to see the whole truth. It does not mean I am nothing as an individual, but I am more than myself and my individuality is **always** enhanced when exercised with others in mind and heart.

In our blood families, we are more than an individual. I am husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, grand parent, uncle, aunt, and so forth. I am also a friend to others outside my blood family as well as a member of my Church

[parish, archdiocese, worldwide and heaven itself], civic community, nation, and world. Each of these of course has varying levels and demands of allegiance. The point is that I am more than a mere individual.

That is the point of the story about the three Wise Men. Indeed, we see Jesus as an individual and he sees us as an individual, but always more. Much as a dad when speaking to his grown son, is not speaking to a mere random man, but rather to a man who is his son, it makes a difference. The dad is incapable of speaking any other way!

Let us take on two tasks this Epiphany — first, go to the deepest recesses of your heart, to your very core where God himself dwells, and meet him again. Review your immediate past year and reflect on how you have grown [or not] in your relationship with him. This calls for an adult-like honesty that allows one the freedom to be quite frank with the person you see in the mirror. Remember that he already knows what you ought to say [he is God]. Secondly, pray for courage, that you can, just as the Wise Men did, go by a different route, manifesting Him as He is to others. Make this year different in how you make Jesus known in your world. Let others know who he is to you and who he is to all of us.

In 2023, let us be the wise men and women, young and old, broken and healed, to our world which is so desperate for truth and love.

pace – bene,

