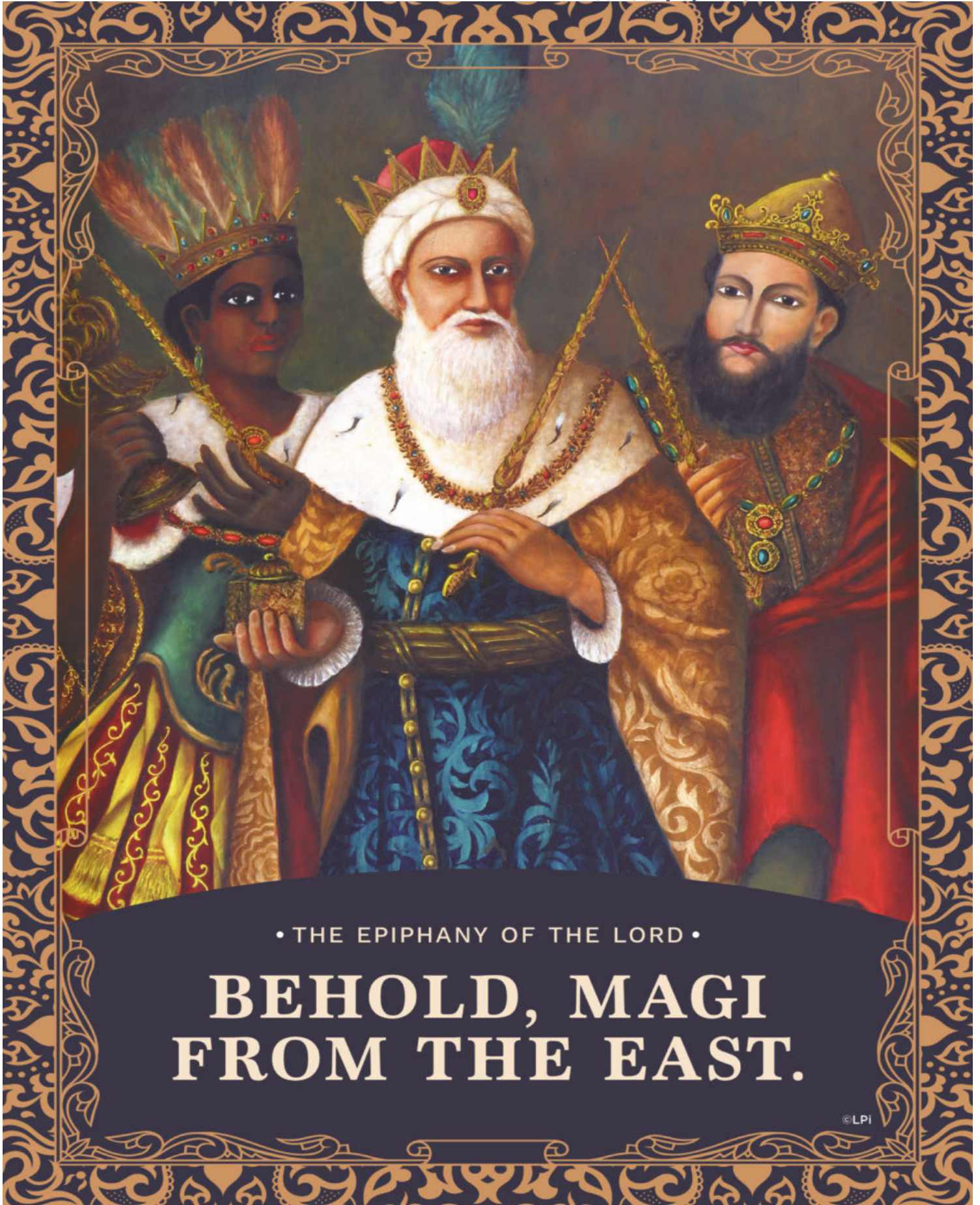


THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 5, 2025



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



Dear Parishioners,

Catholic psychiatrist Dr. Aaron Kheriaty summarizes the history of psychoanalysis. (*The Catholic Guide to Depression*, xxx-xxxiii, Sophia Press, 2012). He writes:

“The founder of psychoanalysis, and probably the most famous psychiatrist in history, Sigmund Freud, was profoundly antireligious. In fact, he argued that religious belief was not just mistaken; it was pathological. Believers were not simply wrong, according to Freud; they were sick; they had an illness. Religious faith was ‘neurotic’. In his phrase, religion was the ‘universal obsessive neurosis of mankind.’

Furthermore, his strange view of human psychology claimed that man, at his core, was merely a bundle of unconscious sexual and aggressive drives. Freud’s biographer Ernest Jones listed the six most common words Freud used to describe our unconscious mental life: repressed, active, bestial, infantile, alogical, and of course, sexual. Such are the forces bubbling up from the seething cauldron of our unconscious. When the patient (with the expert assistance of the psychoanalyst) looked inward, what he saw was not pretty. This hardly sounds consonant with the Christian view of the dignity of the human person, who is (although fallen and flawed) still rational and free—capable of knowledge and love, created in the image and likeness of God.

The next in the line of famous psychiatrists, Carl Jung, appeared at first glance to be friendlier toward religion. But in some ways his theories were even more subversive of religion than Freud’s. While not overtly denying God’s existence, Jung argued that God is merely housed in mankind’s ‘collective unconscious.’ In the last analysis, for Jung, we are God and God is us. No claim could be more contrary to the Judeo-Christian understanding of God. In fact, the temptation to self-divinization was precisely what Satan whispered in the ear of our first parents: *You shall be like God*. (Gen. 3:5).

Now, the Freudian and Jungian accounts of religious belief—despite their claims to scientific status—were in fact unscientific, indeed untestable and therefore unfalsifiable and circular in their reasoning. Many who wanted to turn psychology into a legitimate science wanted none of this mumbo jumbo.

The next wave in psychology after psychoanalysis was behaviorism, which dominated the psychological sciences in the middle of the twentieth century. But the behaviorists often went off the rails as well—just in a different direction. According to behaviorism, an objective science of the mind must be restricted to externally observable things. The only thing that mattered were measurable environmental inputs and observable behavioral outputs. What transpired in the subjective ‘mind’ was set aside.

Behaviorist experiments produced some interesting scientific findings in psychology. While these experimental findings were one thing, radical behaviorist theory, which was not scientific but ideological, was another. Radical behaviorists claimed that the human being is *nothing but* a wholly determined product of inputs and outputs. The mind functioned like a machine that runs entirely on its prior programming—its history of rewards and punishments. This was all we needed to explain the human person and human psychology. This theory waved farewell to human reason and free will.

It followed from this that, according to radical behaviorism, human beings had no distinctive stature among the animals. The most influential American behaviorist, B. F. Skinner, actually claimed that we could understand humanity completely by studying the behavior of rats and pigeons. Skinner’s bestselling manual on childrearing recommended that parents feed their children according to rigidly controlled schedules and give them a minimum of attention and affection. The title of his most famous book on human psychology is telling: *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. There you have it.

Naturally, this sort of nonsense could continue for only so long. The brain was smuggled back into psychology through scientific advances in neuroimaging techniques such as MRI and PET scans. More refined methods in experimental psychology allowed for advances in studying social and interpersonal relationships. Things began to look much more complex, and much more interesting, than the behaviorists dreamed.

But even today human reason and free will are often still denied by many neuroscientists or scientific popularizers. Their conclusions are in fact bad philosophy masquerading as science. The so-called New Atheist writers, including Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens, try to convince us that all things distinctively human, including religious faith, can be (or someday will be) shown to be reducible to chemical discharges in the brain. According to this ideology, all that we are, all that we think, and all that we do are completely determined by our biology.”

The word psychiatrist means literally “doctor of the soul”. Well-meaning psychiatrists and psychologists have done a lot of good. Their field has furnished some valuable insights into the human condition. Their therapy has helped many broken people. However, as Dr. Kheriaty made clear in his historical summary, there are serious shortcomings in this field of thought and ideas have consequences.

On the other hand, there are no shortcomings whatsoever in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the divine Doctor of the Soul. Simply living the Gospel with sturdy sincerity and complete commitment brings to the interior life a heap of healing.

God bless you!

Father Eric



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Saturday, January 4, 2025

5:00pm(Vigil) Anunziata Paccioni

Sunday, January 5, 2025

8:00am The Gatto Family
 10:00am Anthony Sutter
 12Noon Tom Murphy

WEEKDAYS

Monday: 9:00am People of the Parish
 Tuesday: 9:00am Paige Graff-Living
 Wednesday: 9:00am Maria & Luca Treglia
 Thursday: 9:00am Anthony Scappatura
 Friday: 9:00am Christine Wasnieski

Saturday, January 11, 2025

9:00am Martin Greenwood
 5:00pm(Vigil) Anita Burrattini

Sunday, January 12, 2025

8:00am Kieth Donohue
 10:00am Loreti & Ungarelli Family-Living & Deceased
 12Noon Ronald Lauria

BAPTISM SEMINAR

SATURDAY, January 25, 2025

Immediately following the 6:00pm Mass at St. Thomas Church there will be a meeting for expectant parents and parents of newborn babies. Parents are expected to be at Mass as well as the meeting. We urge parents to attend before the baby is born. We also urge Godparents to participate by attending this meeting. This is a requirement for all parents prior to the Baptism of their child.



MARRIAGE BANNS

2nd Banns Brian Nickel & Brittany Granata
 2nd Banns Joseph Power & Veronica Praia



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Sunday, January 5, 2025

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 10:00am Vincenzo & Bellina Demetrio
 11:00am Eva DeCrescenzo
 1:00pm Antoinette Salmieri
 6:00pm Thomas Jon Sjeime

WEEKDAYS

Monday: 7:00 am Thomas O'Malley
 8:00am Dorothy G. O'Mara
 Tuesday: 7:00am Jose Leano
 8:00am John Savino
 Wednesday: 7:00am Carlos Guico
 8:00am Herta & Karl Lillo
 Thursday: 7:00am Christopher Morris
 8:00am John J. Garland
 Friday: 7:00am Diane Casamassima
 8:00am Christopher DeBenedictis

Saturday, January 11, 2025

8:00am Angela DiBari
 6:00pm(Vigil) Thomas P. Monahan, Jr.

Sunday, January 12, 2025

9:00am Pablo Monzon
 10:00am Angelo Deleonardis
 11:00am Barbara Cannizzaro
 1:00pm Grisanti, Corso & Esposito Family
 2:30pm ***Special Needs- Jennie Franca***
 6:00pm Vincenza Brullo

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Ethel Ducey, Joseph A. Pulizotto, Ellen Merli, Louis Amatrudo, Stacey Benvenuto, Mary Baldaracci, Gertrude Sokolowsky, Frank Zagarino, John Michael Pasquale, Christopher Walsh, Hope Vosilla, Helen Cole, Alan Mackiewicz, David Balaban, Bob Ryan, Kristen Kress, Bobby Salvador, Amanda Marchese, Michael Rokicki, Tom Quercia, Thomas Marchese, Angelo Cordella, Dominick Aiello, Juliann Bonavita, Isla Albashara .

In your sympathy, please pray for: Maria Longo , Charles Butterworth, Msgr. Charles P. Coen.

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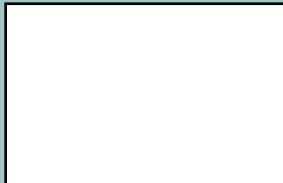
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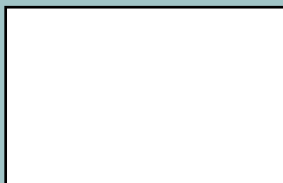
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