

January 7, 2018

Time Flies - What's Your Plan?

Today we celebrate Epiphany. Monday, we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Believe it or not, Lent is right around the corner. It is a month away (4 ½ weeks to be precise). This is the time to really begin thinking about how to enter into the season of Lent. I propose to you that your Plan ought to have three different areas: Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

We hear in the Gospel today how the Wise Men brought these gifts to the Lord. How can we do likewise? Gold is money—almsgiving. This is not only the support of the Church and its ministry, it is the giving to the poor and needy—perhaps even the homeless person on Main St. You don't have to give money if you are uncomfortable with that. Stop by a local store and buy a sub or burger or something and hand it to whomever. Have left-overs? Call St. Joseph's House and ask if you can bring them by as a donation to the residents.

Frankincense is prayer—like sweet-smelling incense billowing up to Heaven. There are many ways to pray, but a powerful one is Intercessory Prayer. Intercessory Prayer is a cooperation with God and an invitation for Him to act with Mercy and power in the life of another. Perhaps pick someone at random and pray for them all of Lent, or for a week and then pick someone else. Like a secret Santa! Maybe, gather a few friends, pick a spot at random (or preplanned), and say the rosary as a group—particularly for the people in the area.

Myrrh is self-sacrifice. This ought to be on a couple of levels as well—some form of fasting and some form of doing something for another. The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy are great sources of ideas. Much of what I already mentioned falls under these.

We have many nursing homes and assisted and retirement living places in our area. No matter how wonderful the level of the care, there are times that the residents feel not only like they are sick, but imprisoned. How about a home-bound (or nearly so) neighbor? Myrrh.

If you are paying attention, you have noticed that this is none other than the suggestion of Christ Himself. On Ash Wednesday we will hear from the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus teaches that it is by Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving that we quietly and humbly follow His example—“...and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”

It is the Holy Spirit of God that animates our souls and gives us the drive and courage to do these things. The Holy Spirit that was first welcomed and invited into the world by a human when Jesus was Baptized 2000 years ago. Let's make sure He is busy this Year!

Fr. Michael