

Readings from the Word of God

Sunday, 3 December, 2023

Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Secrets of Heaven §8873

...humility and submission are the essentials of worship; for without them worship is not worship, only bodily actions which are an imitation of those made by people engaged in true worship. Such actions have no life at all in them. Life from the Lord flows only into a humble and submissive heart, since it is fitted to receive. And it is fitted to receive because when a heart is truly humble no self-love or love of the world stands in the way.

Secrets of Heaven §10646

It is said that the Lord alone is to be worshipped. Anyone unacquainted with the nature of true worship of the Lord may think that the Lord loves to be worshipped and desires glory from people, like someone who grants another person what he requests because that other person pays him respect. Anyone who thinks like that has no idea at all of what love is like, let alone of what God's love is like. God in His love does not desire worship and glory for His own sake but for that of man and his salvation. For humility exists in those who worship the Lord and give Him glory, and from those in whom humility exists the proprium or what belongs to self departs. And so far as this departs, the Divine is received; for the proprium or self, being evil and false, is the one thing that stands in the way of the Divine. This is the glory of the Lord, and worship of Him exists to that end.

Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Secrets of Heaven §7038

True worship of the Lord consists in performing useful services; and such services during a person's life in the world lie in a proper fulfillment of his function by each person, whatever his own position, that is, in serving his country, its communities, and his neighbour with all his heart. They also lie in honest dealings with fellow human beings and in the diligent discharge of duties, with full regard for each person's character. These useful deeds are the principal ways of exercising charity and the principal means of worshipping the Lord.