

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

One of the perennial themes of the Christmas season is the giving of gifts. Christmas shopping, Gifts under the tree, the exciting gifts, the awkward gifts, the fattening gifts, the not so exciting gifts...all of it is part of the festivity, fun and faith.

Epiphany is the celebration of the magi bringing their gifts to the Christ child. The rich gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh all had a ceremonial and religious dimension. They were gifts given to a king, but they were also gifts that were given to the pagan gods. Gold was the obvious gift of wealth. Frankincense was offered in the ancient religions as not only a way to make a costly and sacrificial offering, but the incense was actually used in worship as part of the greater temple sacrifice. Myrrh was used as a pain killer and a perfume to anoint a dead body and thus linked with Our Lord's death and burial.

Each of the gifts were therefore not only costly sacrifices but were linked with worship. They still are. When we come to Mass, we see the silver or gold sacred vessels on the altar. We smell the fragrant incense smoke arising and the fragrant holy oils in the Eastern tradition are referred to as the myrrh.

We thank God for these rich gifts at Epiphany and this epiphany is also timed as the run up to our annual stewardship campaign. Over the next two weeks we will ask you to make your costly offering to the Lord. Every member of Our Lady of the Rosary should follow the example of the magi and bring their offerings to the Lord. Next week we will hear more about the campaign, and everyone will receive a mailing with full information. Then on January 18-19 we will present our 2025 pledge cards.

Please prayerfully consider what the Lord is calling you to do as we move forward to do his work in this place.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker