The Epiphany of the Lord – January 4/5, 2020 – Reflection

This past Christmas Eve, hundreds and hundreds of people of all shapes and sizes, ages and colors gathered to celebrate the gift of the Savior’s birth. The church was bathed in the warm glow of little twinkling lights on the trees and wreathes all over the sanctuary. The choir sang carols of the season as the Christmas Story was told by a voice that sounded like the announcement of the angels to the shepherds on that first Christmas night. And then, as the people began to sing the beautiful Silent Night, the procession to the altar began to solemnly make its way down the aisle to the manger and the altar.

Usually the Celebrant of the Mass would be last in the procession, but on this night, the Deacon held that place because in his hands he carried the image of the Baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes to lay in the manger.

As I got to the front of the church, I stepped to the side before ascending to the sanctuary and knelt down. Deacon soon passed by and took the Baby Jesus and placed Him in the manger. Deacon then came back down to the aisle and joined me in kneeling ... “O Come, Let Us Adore Him!”

The refrain swelled as choir and people sang “Sleep In Heavenly Peace” and I found myself tearing up at the beauty of that quiet moment of a family of faith sharing that faith for all to see and hear. As I knelt, I became aware of the littlest movement near me. A tiny little girl had
broken free from her Mom and Dad in a pew nearby and came up the aisle where she knelt between the Deacon and me. “O Come, Let Us Adore Him!” She was no theologian but she knew in her heart that God had given a great gift to her and to all people, the gift of His Son born this night as a tiny little Baby. She wanted to see. She wanted to say thank you. She wanted to give the Baby a gift ... the gift of her love.

Today we remember that people from all over the world heard the message of Christmas and with grateful hearts brought gifts to honor the Baby King: Gold for a monarch; Myrrh for a servant who would suffer for His people; Frankincense for God made flesh dwelling in the temple of His Creation. Beautiful gifts to mark a beautiful birth but all of the gifts of the Magi pale in comparison to the gift of love a tiny little girl in Millbury brought to the Baby on Christmas Eve.

The scriptures tell us, “And a little child shall lead them ...” Pray God that little girl lead the rest of us in her church to give to God what she gave ... a grateful heart, a heart filled with love, a heart that just wanted to get a little closer to see the miracle of the Holy Baby born for me. She showed all of us what the perfect gift for God would be.

“O star of wonder, star of night,

Star with royal beauty bright;

Westward leading, still proceeding,

Guide us to thy perfect light.”