

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God, amen.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:11

God is the Giver who gives all, for He is the source of all good. However, we often see the creation giving the Creator! For example, in the story of the the Lord’s Resurrection, the women offered him spices, while Joseph of Arimathea offered Him a new tomb. And Virgin Mary offered everything.

In the Old Testament, we read that many gave offerings to the Lord. The first one is Abel the Righteous. He gave a burnt offering to the Lord of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat (Gen 4). Abraham, the father of fathers also proceeded to offer his only son. And through generations many others gave offerings, and God accepted them so long as they were from a pure heart.

In this day, we remember the three wise men, otherwise known as the Magi offering our Lord three important things: gold, frankincense and myrrh. They came from far to the Lord Christ; they came in love. They exposed themselves to death and perdition, because King Herod, or any of his followers could have destroyed them. But above all, there love to see the newborn reigned over their hearts and their minds, so they sought to satisfy it. Their offerings had meaning in the story of the Nativity. The gold was a symbol of the royalty and greatness of the Lord Christ. The frankincense was a symbol of the Lord’s priesthood, while the myrrh was a symbol of His suffering for us. In addition, these three offerings have deeper meaning when it comes to each of us Christians. Gold symbolizes faith, frankincense relates to hope, while myrrh is a symbol of love. Hence Saint Paul, in his teachings stated “For there are these three things that endure: Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest of these is Love.” (1 Cor 13:13)

Let us see in detail what these three represent in our lives.

Gold: Gold symbolizes great value and purity. Gold was used in the temple of the Old Testament. The ark was overlaid with pure gold inside and outside. Its cover also, and the Cherubim were made of gold (Ex. 37: 2, 6, 7). The Virgin Mary is compared to the golden censer and to the Ark of the Covenant overlaid with pure gold inside and outside. She is compared also to the golden pot that had the manna. (Heb. 9:4) All this is a symbol of the greatness and purity of the Virgin.

Now, how does our soul compare to gold?

Frankincense: It is a symbol of priesthood and worship. It is a symbol of priesthood because the raising of incense is the work of the priests alone (Ex. 30:8) It is also a symbol of worship, for the Psalmist says, “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Ps. 140:2) The incense is also described in the Book of Revelation as the “prayers of the saints”. (Rev. 5:8)

Does our soul rise unto God as incense? “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Rom. 12:1

Myrrh: It is a symbol of suffering. Myrrh has a sweet aroma but a bitter taste, which relates to the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. The suffering of the martyrs and the confessors was their perfume which gave out a sweet smell before God and people. That is why as Christians we enter the Kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22) The Lord has said about the crowns of Saint Paul the Apostle, "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:16) Even the Holy Virgin herself, with all her love to God, and God's love for her, heard the words, ".... A sword will pierce through your own soul also." (Luke 2:35)

Christianity should never be separated from myrrh. "For to you it has been granted.... Not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil. 1:29)

The image of the crucified Christ is that of the offerings of the Magi, for He Himself was the gold, the frankincense and the myrrh on the cross. The gold represents His Kingdom. He was the King who reigned over the devil and saved us from its captivity. The frankincense represents His priesthood, because He offered a sacrifice on behalf of the whole world. The sacrifice was His own blood. He was also myrrh because He suffered the hardest pains for our sake.

How did the Magi know what to bring to our Lord Jesus Christ? Would the Star that led them more than 2000 years ago lead us now? Are we ready to be led by the Star? Do we have the three symbols together, or are we empty? The most precious thing we can offer to God is our heart. That is why our Lord speaks to us through Solomon, "My son, give Me your heart." (Prov. 23:26) Most of the times, we offer Him things outside our souls while our own souls are away from Him.

Let the year 2015 bring a wisdom to all of us Christians so that we offer our Lord gold, frankincense and myrrh, and in return He blesses us with abundant love. As we celebrate Christmas, let us rejoice with the angels and shepherds. As they glorified God in unison, let us have one heart and soul in glorifying the Holy Trinity. Let us, together as God's children say to Him, "Of Your own, we have given You." (1 Chr. 29:14).

Forgive my emptiness, O Lord. Have compassion on my emptiness, and give me what I can give You
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Let the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ and His beloved Holy of Holies Saint Mary be upon us forever, amen.

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