

EPIPHANY

WHAT CAN WE BRING HIM?

What gift can you give a person who has everything? Many of us will have pondered on that problem during the weeks before Christmas. Some fortunate people seem to have everything they need and so whatever you buy them is going to be superfluous. Those first visitors to the new-born baby Jesus may have asked themselves the same question. The shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem had been told by an angel that a Saviour had just been born in a stable in the town. Three wise men from the East, guided by their study of astronomy, came to look for an infant king. Clearly, this child was someone very special. He must have everything he needed. What gifts could they bring him?

Tradition tells us that the shepherds gave Him a lamb and the wise men presented Him with gold, frankincense and myrrh. Each brought whatever they could, the very best they had to offer. We would all love to give Jesus something special. In the words of the Christmas carol,

"What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I would do my part.

Yet what can I give Him? Give my heart."

But is my heart worth offering? Some people have happy and contented lives. They have a strong marriage, loving children, a stable job, a roof over their head, and they try to live a good moral life. They can bring to Jesus a heart full of joy and gratitude. But what about those people whose hearts are deeply attached to sin? What about those whose hearts are filled with sadness, loneliness, anger, doubt? Their heart is damaged and they are convinced that it is not worth giving to anyone. What can I bring Jesus if the best I can offer is my pain and despair? It would be like bringing a child a broken toy. Jesus wouldn't want that kind of gift, would He?

Jesus does want our hearts, whatever condition they may be in. He loves us at every stage of our lives, whether we are near to Him like Our Lady and the saints, or far away because of our sins. If all we are able to offer Him at this moment is a heart that is broken through pain and suffering, He still wants it so that He can heal it. If all we have to offer is a sinful heart, He wants that, too, so that He can forgive us and fill us with His love.

The child born in Bethlehem does have everything, because He is God. There is nothing He needs from us. But there is just one thing He may not have and wants, and that is your heart and mine. We may think that it is too poor and imperfect a gift, but it is the only gift Jesus wants from us. He wants it desperately, because He came into our world for the sole purpose of rescuing us from Satan's clutches.

Lord Jesus, today may we give our whole selves to You because You are God and Saviour.