**A Christmas Offering**

*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,****2****saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”****3****When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;****4****and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.****5****They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:*

***6****“‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
    are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
    who will shepherd my people Israel.’”*

***7****Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.****8****And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”****9****After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.****10****When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.****11****And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.****12****And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. (Matthew 2:1-12)*

Just like the Magi, we also have an offering to give to Jesus – namely, our whole life. Greetings dearly beloved on this Christmas Eve as we hear and imagine once again that special, moving, and special, touching, and holy event, the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. God did not bring the Jewish priests or the famous teachers of the law to the Messiah’s manger. Rather, according to Matthew He brought foreigners to Him, and in Luke’s account lowly shepherds came, people who did not have the respect of the Jewish religious leadership of the day.

Those that recognized Jesus were those whom God found worthy, and they in turn brought gifts that were worthy of infant Jesus. One brought gold, a gift for kings – because Jesus was the true and expected King to come. The other gave frankincense, a special kind of incense because Jesus was the true and expected High Priest to be for all humanity. The third one offered a gift of myrrh, which was used as medicine for pain and many other ailments, having a wonderful aroma as well. This last magus had recognized that this King-Priest would go through much pain, but also that the pain would be a fragrant offering to God.

Whenever a king was born, there would be great rejoicing. When the British royal family had a grandson, there was great jubilation. What happens, however, when the True King, God the Father, sends His Son to us and we recognize Him for Who He is? Who, then, would rejoice or celebrate the birth of God’s Son, especially that He was born in obscurity?

Today we are gathered to celebrate the birth of this exact Royal Child – and just as the Magi placed their offered gifts at Jesus’ feet, recognizing Him as King, Priest, and Suffering Servant, today Jesus present Himself to us in the same way. He is the Son of the King who is worthy to be honored and before Whom it is right to offer our gift. However, since the Magi already gave the right material gifts to Jesus for all time, our appropriate and fitting gifts are to be our individual lives.

God wants us, our whole beings, as offerings to Him, as whole burnt offerings, and sacrifices – because this Infant King, High Priest, and Suffering Servant- (according to Isaiah) is worthy of the most precious gift.

Therefore, let us once again offer our lives to Christ – let us present ourselves before Him with joy, considering it an honor that the True King accepts us into His family when we recognize Him as such and follow Him.

May God give us the realization of how great an honor it is to know Jesus and to place the gift of our life at His feet. Just like the Magi, we also have an offering to give to Jesus – namely, our whole life. The Lord bless you all. Amen.