

Archbishop Smith: 20/20 Vision

This past week I've heard a lot of people exchanging best wishes for the new year. One in particular caught my attention and gave me pause. It was a wish for a year of good vision. As I wondered about that, it dawned on me that the person was playing with the number of this new year: 2020. The wish for 20/20 vision in the year 2020 has probably been expressed often, but it was the first I heard it.

This wish for good vision is a helpful entryway into the message of Epiphany, which was celebrated Sunday. The word, as we know, means "revelation." What is revealed in the feast of the Epiphany is that Jesus is saviour not only for the Jewish people from whom he was born but also for the whole world. His saving work is universal in its embrace.

That is what is revealed. But, do we have the clear vision needed to see it? Well, the wise men did. The narrative tells us that they "knelt down and paid him homage," which is to say, they worshipped Jesus. Worship is an act reserved for God. They saw clearly, with 20/20 vision, if you will, that this child, obviously human, is somehow also at the same time God, their God.



A nativity scene is displayed in front of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Nisku, Alberta. Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media

It is important to notice just how they were able to see. The wise men saw clearly because they had the light of a star. This star guided the wise men

along their journey and then stopped over the place where Jesus was. Obviously, that is not how stars normally work. Something very much out of the ordinary is happening to alter the normal course of things. The extraordinary activity is that of God, leading the wise men to Jesus and, once they arrived, enabling them to see clearly. They did not see with unaided human vision; they saw with God's help. This teaches us that God, who reveals his Son to the world, wants people to see the revelation, and He acts to give the clear vision we need. The wise men were granted the light of a star. Our gift from God is the light of faith. In faith, we see with clear vision what God wants us to see: that Jesus is both God and man, given to us as Lord and Savior.

People may well be wishing one another a year of good vision. What the Gospel offers us is perfect vision, not just for a year, but for always. It is the vision born of faith that sees the truth of Jesus and, from that, sees the truth of how we must live in him. When the wise men saw, they were overwhelmed with joy. May that overwhelming joy be ours also, as we see in faith the gift of God in Jesus Christ.