

“Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.” Today, as we celebrate the beginning of National Migration Week, people from the many nations that make up this local Church here in South Florida come to adore our Lord, who comes as a light for the world, the light for the nations.

Epiphany – which means “manifestation” or revelation celebrates the fact that when Jesus was born as a man in Bethlehem he came not for just one people but for all peoples, all races – of all times and places. This would be something that the Jewish people would find difficult to accept. They knew themselves to be God’s Chosen People – and indeed they were, and they still are. But in choosing the Jews, God in no way meant to disparage or belittle those who the Jews still call the “goyim” – or the nations. Indeed, the election of the Jews was not a put down for those who were not Jews – for in choosing Israel as a people peculiarly his own, God wanted them to be “a light to the nations”, a light that would lead the nations to the knowledge of the true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Jews were elected by God not to be against the world but to be, in a special way, for the world.

And so, soon after Jesus’ birth, wise men from the East come to worship him. Their arrival on the scene shows, as it were, that the Savior born in Bethlehem comes to save not just the Jews but the entire world. The Magi represent the non-Jewish world – they represent us: Jesus comes to save us.

While Jesus’ mission was first to the lost sheep of Israel, it was not to be exclusively for them. Jesus would tell his Apostles: Go out into all the world and preach the good news. The good news of salvation is “catholic” – a word that comes from the Greek language and means universal. If Salvation is “catholic”, then the Church which Jesus founded to preach the good news of salvation must necessarily be Catholic as well. If the Church is the Father’s House, then all those who are God’s children through baptism should feel at home in their Father’s House.

Today the presence of so many ethnic groups that form part of our Archdiocesan community should show that all can and do find a home in the Catholic Church. Our diversity of languages, cultures, and races gives witness to the “catholicity” of the gospel message of salvation. This diversity does not divide the Body of Christ – it enriches it. Our unity is not founded on race or language or nation of origin – rather it is founded on Christ. We acknowledge one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.

The Church is the Israel of the New Covenant – and we are a people chosen as once the Jews were chosen: to be a light to the nations. We live in a divided world and what divides us is not the diversity we see around us. What divides us is sin. If we are to be a light to the nations we must model what a reconciled world looks us.

This was the mission of Jesus who though he was the only begotten Son of God became our brother: he comes to make us members of God’s family: sons and daughters of one

Father reconciled to God and to one another through Jesus Christ in the gift of His Holy Spirit.

Our world today is increasingly globalized: Pope Benedict XVI has remarked that while globalization has made us all neighbors it has not made us brothers. It is the Church, the Church that is Catholic – that brings into its communion people of every race, language and culture - that must teach the world how to live as brothers and sisters.

Part of the globalization we experience today is the fact of migration. In a globalized world, goods and merchandise made in one continent are bought and sold in another, half a world away; information and money can cross borders in an instant; and, in a globalized world, people also increasingly move across borders – often in dramatic ways.

The Church teaches us not to fear the migrant – and the Church warns us not to mistreat the migrant. In a way, just as we call Jesus the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, we can refer to him as the Migrant of Migrants as well. In becoming a man like us, he “migrated” from heaven. He became a citizen of our world so that we in turn might become citizens of the world to come. And those who will enter into his heavenly homeland, will do so because, as he himself will tell us: “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me”.

This is why the Church will continue to speak out on behalf of migrants everywhere. We speak out in defense of those, especially the young, who are trafficked across borders to be exploited in the sex trade. We will continue to advocate for a just and equitable reform of a broken immigration system that continues to separate families for unacceptable periods of time and that provides no path to citizenship for millions who work in jobs that otherwise would have gone unfilled. We will defend the rights of refugees and asylum seekers for a safe haven from persecution and violence. And thanks to our Catholic Charities over the years thousands have been successfully resettled here in South Florida and elsewhere to begin new lives. And, because every child of God should feel at home in his Father’s House, as a Catholic community we will continue to assure that – in our pastoral care and outreach to the newcomers among us – we will speak their Mother’s tongue so that the words of today’s psalm will always ring true here in the Archdiocese of Miami: “Lord, all the nations will worship you.”