

What would you say if someone asked you, “Where can I find Jesus?” I ask because that’s what the Magi do in our Epiphany Gospel today. The first words spoken by any human being in the Gospel of Matthew are these, “Where is the new-born King of the Jews?” The Magi were asking a very specific question prompted by seeing the star. But their quest for Jesus is still very real for many people today.

And, you know what, I have a perfect answer for you to give to anyone asking that question, “Where can I find Jesus?” You can find Jesus right here at Holy Family church on Friday night, February 2 from 7 PM to 9 PM. Of course, Jesus is present in many ways and places, including in the Blessed Sacrament here in church at all times. But I mention that particular night and time because that is when we’re having our first Holy Family Mercy Night.

What is Mercy Night? It’s an idea that started at Blessed Sacrament parish in Seattle, but is now coming to Holy Family. A Mercy Night is an occasion when a person can experience music, candlelight,

Eucharistic adoration, testimony, confession, and healing prayer all in the same evening, in the same place – as one sees fit.

This is something different from a mass. The mass is a liturgy. It has a set structure, a start, and an ending. One is expected to be there the whole time and participate in certain ways. The mass also requires insider knowledge and membership to fully partake. But a Mercy Night is much more flexible. On Mercy Night you just drop in whenever you want – and you leave whenever you want. There are no expectations or pressures regarding what you do, or how long you stay. You take part in whatever you want to participate in. Maybe you just want to listen to the music. Maybe you would like the prayer teams to pray over you for healing from some wound or stress. Maybe you do want to go to confession. Maybe you just want to pray in front of Jesus in the Monstrance, or read in the prayerful atmosphere. It's up to you. The purpose is simply to provide an opportunity to encounter Jesus in some way.

Coming back to the Magi on this Epiphany weekend, the Magi were non-Jews, but who had some sense that God had worked a great thing on earth. They were outsiders, but they had good hearts and a desire to do God's will. They were on a long journey looking for God.

“Where can I find Jesus?”

We may know people who are like the Magi. They are outsiders to the Church, or Christianity, or even to religion in general. But they have good hearts and they're searching, and maybe even asking, “Where is this Jesus?” Remember, we Catholics are meant to be Disciples of Christ, and that means welcoming the Magi of our day, inviting to the Church all who are searching for God.

But to invite non-Catholics to a mass might be too much, too soon. It can be confusing to be thrown into a liturgy like that. On the other hand, a Mercy Night, as I've said, is much more accessible to everyone than a liturgy is, because there are no expected levels of knowledge or participation. You can take in as much or as little time

there as you want. And all the offerings (except the sacrament of reconciliation) are open to anyone.

But it's not only non-Catholics who are like the Magi. Many of us members of the Church feel like outsiders, as well. We're also looking for more Jesus. We also ourselves feel the need for healing, forgiveness, and His presence. Like the Magi we feel drawn to kneel and worship the Messiah come among us as one of us -- if we could only find Him.

That is the power of Mercy Night. Jesus really is here! They may not be able to put their finger on it, but even non-believers can get a sense of God's presence when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the monstrance on the altar surrounded by candles. Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament and watches over the whole Mercy Night – but in a quiet way, like a babe in a manger.

Where can we find Jesus? Jesus can be found in the quiet dark of this church. I find it significant that so much of the Christmas story

takes place at night. We can associate the night-time with danger, fear, and the forces of darkness. Christ, after all, is the LIGHT of the world.

But it's also true that He came into the darkness of this world – and sanctified that darkness by being born at midnight, by drawing the whole world to him – as represented by the gentile Magi – by the light of the star.

Where can I find Jesus? Jesus is found in the forgiveness of reconciliation, in the beauty of music, in the sharing of stories of human lives touched by His grace. Jesus is found and felt in healing prayer, as people pray over those in need of His healing. Jesus is found in mercy. That is why we are offering this night of mercy on Friday, February 2 from 7 PM to 9 PM. We're inviting all the modern Magi. We know where Jesus is to be found. Please come and bring a friend who is in need of finding Him.