

It Matters that You Bring It

A mediation based on Matthew 2:1-12 on Pageant Sunday
December 11, 2016
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Pageant Sunday is my favourite Sunday, every year. What made this year's pageant special—aside from the costumes, laughter, and hullabaloo, was the song that Pancake Lunch wrote. "It doesn't matter what your thing is, it just matters that you bring it!" These lyrics mirror the words of the "stunning" angel in the pageant: "Any gift," she says, "is beautiful because it is given."

Great lines to keep in mind, but, oh, so hard to live.

You see, we live in a bubble where most of us, if not all, are going to be inundated with exactly the gifts we asked for. So, whatever Pancake Lunch sings, our Christmases are likely to look *as if* getting exactly what I want really is the most important thing. This is true for me, too. I know that it's the thought that is supposed to matter. But (between you and me) what I really want to be able to say on Christmas morning is, "Guess what, I got a Mazda Miata!"

Still, those words from Pancake Lunch's song haunt me. "It doesn't matter what your thing is, it just matters that you bring it!" Giving from the heart, rather than getting what you want, is what is supposed to really matter.

And I can think of one way, this coming holiday season, that this can be true; one case, where even though a gift costs us nothing, cash-wise, the fact that you give it is everything.

This is what I mean. Over the course of these holidays, you will sit down to eat with many friends and relatives, including the ones who get under your skin. You will sit down with friends who speak unkindly of you behind your back, with relatives—cousins, perhaps—who refuse to do their fair share for gramps and grandma. You will sit down with people who are so full of themselves and their egos that they never ever once look you in the eye and ask, "but how are you?"

And the only thing you can give these grumps, grinches and ogres that is beyond price is the gift of yourself, without condition. You can give them your listening ear, your attention and care, and perhaps even your love. You can offer all these irksome people the same kind of homage the wise kings offered Jesus—not the gold and frankincense and myrrh, but their bended knees and adoration.

It isn't easy, offering "irritating others" this sort of homage. It is rarely fun. To give of yourself, though, as the Three Kings in Bethlehem bent their knees for Jesus; to make a point of really being "all there" for the other, no matter how little they impress you; to remake that other person into a "Thou," whether he or she deserves it or not; this is the gift that is most beautiful because it is given, and this is the thing that matters most because you bring it.