

We see in today's gospel that there are three different kinds of people. There are those who are hostile to Christian beliefs, there are those who are indifferent to Jesus, and then there are those who will worship Jesus and love Jesus with all their hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it springs the issues of life." When you think about that verse, what it means is that we—each one of us—need to keep or guard our hearts. Why? Because out of our hearts spring the issues of life.

If you look at every situation, every issue in the world, if you deduce it back to its root cause, it's almost always a heart issue, isn't it. There's something in the human heart that sometimes keeps us from being the people that we want to be, that we know we ought to be, that we should be.

Maybe a lack of compassion or love, a lack of wanting to involve ourselves in the life of other people, in the needs of the world. So, when we think about these three types of people, it is important for us to not just think about thousands of years ago but to think about us today, who we are within our hearts.

In the story, King Herod is hostile to Jesus. This king, this ruler is actively seeking to get rid of Jesus. Why? Because as a ruler, hearing that the King of the Jews was born and he was a ruler there, he's thinking, That child King is challenging my power structure.

Challenge someone in how they are living, and you will see hostility. To take to another level, Herod sought to kill the children, but we have that today as Herod takes on many forms.

People don't like to hear that there is a live child within the womb – people do not want to hear the hard truth. We don't want to hear what these children may become if allowed to live. Some don't even want to hear that God loves them.

There is a swelling intolerance for Christianity in the public square. It is shrinking day after day. Our public schools teach about that first Thanksgiving but fail to say who they were thankful to or to mention the Christian foundation of our nation.

The other's who represent Herod are those who just are angry, people we avoid crossing.

Then there are those who are indifferent to Jesus, represented by the chief priests and the scribes. The Magi come seeking Jesus, and they know where he is born, as do the scribes and chief priests. But they don't bother. Maybe they were just lazy or comfortable where they are in life. No need to stretch things.

Still goes on today, doesn't it? People can be spiritually apathetic. And I don't mean to be crude or rude, but some of us are just apathetic to Jesus.

We know that he is God, we know he was born, we know he died on a cross and rose again, but for whatever reason it doesn't move our hearts at all.

There are other things we'd rather be doing than worshipping Jesus. And just because we are here, does not exclude us from apathy. On number of occasions during the consecration or readings and most importantly, the homily, I see people typing on their phones.

Imagine if you had a life-threatening illness, you needed a heart transplant and somebody said, "I'm willing to give up my life so that you may have life." Are you going to be indifferent to that person?

Are you going to say, "Oh, yeah, well, yes, it's great they died but hey, I'm alive, so great," and you just go on with your life? I don't think so, right? When somebody is willing to give up their life so that you may have life, that's going to impact your heart.

You're going to spend the rest of your life thinking, I need to live differently because somebody gave up everything so that I might be here. And that's why if you're here today and you're indifferent to Jesus, you have to say, "God, why is my heart indifferent to Jesus?"

He gave up his life that I may have it. Not only to give me an abundant life now but to give me an everlasting life for all eternity." Yes, examine your hearts.

Then third, those who have come to worship, represented by the Magi. They're seeking after him. I'm sure the journey was not an easy one. They won't stop until they find Jesus, even if it means parking issues. They will be here.

And when they find Jesus, we find that they lavish gifts upon Jesus. They give fully from their hearts. It is not so much the gifts, but the heart of love in giving them to Jesus.

Have you ever received a really terrible gift? I don't mean the funny Secret Santa gift. Here is what I received from Secret Santa a tee shirt that reads (I unveil the tee shirt) "Don't Hassle Me. I'm local."

A couple of years ago, Time ran a story written by Kit Yarrow that chronicled some of the worst gifts given that readers had submitted.

One reader shared how she had received a waffle iron from her husband. That wouldn't be the worst gift ever, except for what was implied in the relationship. "He thought if we had a waffle iron, I could make waffles for him," she said—which makes you wonder whether he really was trying to give her a gift, or whether he wanted to give himself a gift.

But that one was actually generous compared to one reader whose spouse always tells them, "Things will be cheaper after Christmas sales!" Then they never actually give them anything—they just say, "I owe you one!"

But I would suggest that it's not just the gift itself that makes a gift bad at Christmas: It's actually the giver's attitude and demeanor that makes it really bad. But if a giver has a demeanor and attitude of thoughtfulness and care, then even a bad gift isn't so bad.

It's actually kind of touching, in a strange way. I mean, how many parents hold onto shabby items for years, just because their child took the time and care to give it to them? You see, the people behind the gifts are what make for the quality of any gift.

In some sense, people are actually the gift beyond what they give. So, today I would like you to look into your heart, and see where you find yourself? Are you angry or hostile, are you indifferent? Or have you come to worship and love Jesus with all your heart?