



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

The Epiphany of the Lord-January 6<sup>th</sup>2021

***Readings: Isaiah 60: 1-6, Psalm 71, Ephesians 3: 2-3. 5-6,***

***Matthew 2: 1-12***

The Freemasons are often accused of being a ‘Secret Society’. Their response is to point out that they are not a secret society – after all they are publicly known, have branches in most places and members walk openly through the streets to lodge meetings bearing their trademark briefcases full of regalia for the rituals. Instead, they advertise that they are rather ‘a society with secrets’. Membership of this gnostic group remains, understandably, forbidden to Catholics.

I am not – and never have been, in spite of numerous invitations from well-meaning men in successive parishes – a member of the Masonic movement.

However, at this time, I feel it only right to finally come out and tell you that I am a member of a secret society. Remarkably few people have heard of it and yet it is worldwide and with a huge unseen, almost unrecognised membership. The senior adepts, three of us, meet periodically, plague permitting, in the Globe pub in Lostwithiel over a pint of ‘Stoggs’ and ‘Dog’ to review the international situation. The Philosopher. The Teacher and the Priest – personal names are avoided at the highest level – mull over the challenges facing our society and correlate the activity of our universal movement.

The Secret Society to which I refer follows in the great tradition of Catholic movements like the Templars and the Hospitallers in having a undergirding of courtly chivalry and commitment to the Catholic Church.

As current Grand Master I am, for the first time in history, mandated to reveal the existence of the most ancient order of 'The Knights Bungler'.

We are a universal and timeless brotherhood committed to the service of Christ but regularly and embarrassingly falling short of our highest aims.

Our good intentions often end in unintended consequence which God alone can rescue and redeem. We are 'Bunglers' and not proud of it.

Indeed honest 'bungling' is the surest way to redemptive humility.

To be honest with you, for years before I knew of the Knights Bungler, never mind became Grand Master, I was effectively a practising Knight.

Freelance bungling often precedes formal admittance to the Sacred Order.

As committed 'Bunglers' we set out each day to kneel before the Child in the arms of Mary and follow our crucified and Risen Lord wherever He leads. But the truth is, 'O necessary sin of Adam that won for us so great a Redeemer', we usually manage to make a pig's ear of it somewhere along the way. It is at that point we know for sure and yet again, how dependent we are on God's mercy to put things right, to redeem the muddle we have made.

Why do I bring this up on Epiphany? Why this sensational revelation?

Well, the quick among you will be dawning on the realisation that the Magi, the mysterious visitors from the East with symbolic gifts, were among the earliest adepts of the Knights Bungler.

Look at the story. They set out to find and worship the new born king. By their studies, divine wisdom and celestial guidance they make the long journey to this unlikely two bit moth -eaten petty province of a client kingdom. So far so good. Then human wisdom takes over. No longer following the sign they, reasonably, reckon that the best place to look for

a king is in a palace. What their human wisdom doesn't admit or foresee is that shipping up at the court of a paranoid psychopath with news that his replacement is somewhere on site is not likely to end well. It's a classic 'bungle'. Well meaning, letting go of the divine wisdom in a rush of our own 'common sense', temporarily forgetting the signs, seeking the advice and approval of the obvious human authority. In short, it's a classic 'bungle'. 'Thanks for getting us this far, Lord, but I can manage the next bit on my own. 'Whoops'.

We all know what happens next. Day dawns. The Child is found and worshipped. The Magi are informed of their outstanding 'bungle' and they hi-tail it out one way while the Holy Family catches the next donkey to Egypt. Meanwhile the mad marauding monarch massacres the children and earns himself a place in the history of infamy and the lower circles of Hell.

But watch closely. Bungled it was BUT God redeems the human folly. Just as the ungodly imposition of Roman Census brought the Holy Family to Bethlehem to fulfil the Messianic prophecy, so the 'Flight' fulfils another. 'Out of Egypt I have called my Son'.

The new David is born in David's town of David's line.

The new Moses emerges out of Egypt.

The Knights Bungler, good hearted, well intentioned, full of love for Jesus, have set out to do the right thing – and they do. At least they get it half right. The moment they rely on their purely human wisdom, it starts to unravel. BUT.....God can and does redeem our benevolent bungling. Just as Adam's sin brought the glorious sacrifice of the Cross, so our daily efforts and bumbles bring into play the divine mercy and redemptive power of the Father.

Some of you may recognise in this pattern that you, like me, have been an unrecognised member of this sacred order of the Knights Bungler for many years without actually knowing it.

The Knights are utterly committed, all submitted, all gifts offered, to loving and following Jesus and regularly confessing that, when we ‘bungle’, God alone is the hope of redeeming our best intended efforts from the disaster of human folly and fallibility. You may recognise a Knight Bungler. He will be regular at Mass, regular in the confessional, devoted to the Rose Garden of Our Lady and, in St. Paul’s words, ‘a fool for Christ’s sake’. You may want to consider recognising your membership. We are a secret society but with no secrets, just the mystery of God’s love in the gift of divine and eternal life in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.