

The Fourth Wise Man

It was only 10 days before Christmas and I had not yet had an opportunity to take a photo for our annual Christmas card, which always featured my son in a themed photo. This year he had wanted to be a king for Halloween so I had made him a costume that was quite magnificent with a silver and royal blue velvet crown and a cape to match. I decided that I would take his photo with our nativity scene in the background. Today I dressed him in his costume and set up the nativity figures and then realized that we needed a “gift.” Scrambling to find something resembling gold, frankincense or myrrh, I dug out an old silver jewelry box tarnished with age and shined it up just enough for the photo. It might have anything in it, that wasn’t important, it looked regal. I took a dozen photos and headed for the computer to look at them and get the card made up.

I was taken aback by one photo in particular. It was a close-up of my son offering his gift to the baby Jesus, sincerity, and humility on his face as if in that moment in his mind, he was truly present at the birth of Christ. In his outstretched open hands he held a heart-shaped box. Mary and the baby seem to be smiling at his offering as the other figures look on. I could almost hear him say, “I give you my heart.” With the tiniest of voices whispering a reply, “Thank you, just what I wanted.”

My son may be 14 and have Down syndrome, but in that moment he truly became for me the Fourth Wise Man, offering the one gift we all can give, our heart.

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