

The Epiphany of the Lord

January 7, 2018

First Reading - Isaiah 60:1-6

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth,
and thick clouds cover the peoples;
but upon you the LORD shines,
and over you appears his glory.
Nations shall walk by your light,
and kings by your shining radiance.
Raise your eyes and look about;
they all gather and come to you:
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see,
your heart shall throb and overflow,
for the riches of the sea
shall be emptied out before you,
the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.
Caravans of camels shall fill you,
dromedaries from Midian and Ephah;
all from Sheba shall come
bearing gold and frankincense,
and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.
Your house and your kingdom
shall endure forever before me;
your throne shall stand firm forever."

Psalm 72

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
He shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

Justice shall flower in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.
All kings shall pay him homage,
all nations shall serve him.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
the lives of the poor he shall save.



Second Reading - Ephesians 3:2-3a; 5-6

Brothers and sisters:
You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace
that was given to me for your benefit,
namely, that the mystery was made known to me
by revelation.
It was not made known to people in other generations
as it has now been revealed
to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:
that the Gentiles are coheirs,
members of the same body,
and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus
through the gospel.

Gospel - Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
in the days of King Herod,
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?"

We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this,
he was greatly troubled,
and all Jerusalem with him.
Assembling all the chief priests
and the scribes of the people,

He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea,
for thus it has been written through the prophet:

*And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel."*

Then Herod called the magi secretly
and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said,
"Go and search diligently for the child.

When you have found him, bring me word,
that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out.

And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising
preceded them,

until it came and stopped over the place
where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star,
and on entering the house

they saw the child with Mary his mother.

They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

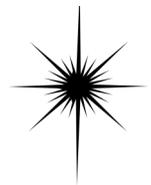
Then they opened their treasures

and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream

not to return to Herod,

they departed for their country by another way.



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The First Nowell

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Then entered in those wise men three
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Psalm 72

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

*Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere:
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!*

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks b night,
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth.

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

Thoughts from our Holy Father

What is *the mystery in which God is hidden*? Where can I find him? All around us we see wars, the exploitation of children, torture, trafficking in arms, trafficking in persons. ... In all these realities, in these, the least of our brothers and sisters who are enduring these difficult situations, there is Jesus. The crib points us to a different path from the one cherished by the thinking of this world: it is the path of *God's self-abasement*, his glory concealed in the manger of Bethlehem, on the cross upon Calvary, in each of our suffering brothers and sisters. The wise men *entered into the mystery*. They passed from human calculations to the mystery: this was their conversion. And our own? Let us ask the Lord to let us undergo that same journey of conversion experienced by the wise men. Let us ask him to protect us and to set us free from the temptations which hide the star. To let us always feel the troubling question: "Where is the star?" whenever—amid the deceptions of this world—we lose sight of it.

-Pope Francis, Homily for Epiphany, January 6, 2015

Questions for Reflection on the Gospel

1. What word, phrase, or image touched you from the Gospels? Why?
2. In the first reading, even though darkness covered the earth, it says light and glory will come to Jerusalem's people. How can this seeming contradiction take place? What does this light reveal to us?
3. The Gospel tells the story of the magi following a star to find Jesus. What does this star look like to you? Who or what serves as your guiding light in your search for Christ?
4. How diligent are you in your search for the "newborn king"? Are your eyes turned toward the sky, focusing on a celestial orb out of your reach, or are they looking to the down-to-earth people you encounter and the events you live each day?
5. In what ways can you be light for others, pointing them toward Jesus, who is true light?
6. The "epiphany" of Jesus, his revelation to the world, was accompanied by the offering of three gifts, each of which symbolized a different aspect of the divine/human savior: **Frankincense** is offered to Jesus, the Son of God, the eternal Word of the Father who is worshiped with the Father and the Spirit. **Gold** is offered to Jesus the King of the human race, the summit of creation. **Myrrh** is offered to the divine/human savior of the world who suffered and died for the salvation of all. With which of these aspects do you most identify? Why?
7. In response to God's message, the Magi rode camels across half the known world. Is there anything that would cause you to put forth effort like that? What made the search worth it for them?
8. Read Pope Francis' words to the left. How can you "enter the mystery" of the Christmas season?

Petitions

Our response: "Hear us when we cry out."

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, you sent your Son to live among us as the Light of the world. Hear our prayers that one day we might enjoy everlasting light and Life with you. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

