

**SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
JANUARY 2, 2022**

Cycle C

Dear Readers: This year January 2, 2022 is a special day for the Church. Today we celebrate *The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord* when people first sensed that God had come to earth in human form as Jesus Christ. Epiphany means appearance or manifestation. It explains the first appearance of the Christ Child; what was hoped for becomes reality. Hopefully these readings about Epiphany will help you understand:

1. the importance of the Magi in spreading the light and words of Jesus
2. that we can be a part of Jesus' light with our own good deeds and words.

Our readings begin with the Old Testament and the prophet who predicted Christ's birth more than 700 years before it actually happened. He tells the story of the Jewish people (also called Israelites or Hebrews) who were forced from their homeland and enslaved for many years. When the Israelites were finally released, they returned to reestablish their former home which had almost been destroyed. They returned to Jerusalem not only to rebuild what had been destroyed but also to bask in the light that the Lord would shine on his people. The first reading for today highlights this. **A reading from the prophet Isaiah (60:1-6)**

**Jerusalem, stand up and shine!
Your new day is dawning.
And the glory of the LORD shines brightly on you.
The earth and its people are covered with darkness,
but the glory of the LORD is shining over you.
Nations and kings will come to the light of your dawning day.**

**Open your eyes and look around!
Crowds are on their way.
Your sons are coming from distant lands,
and your daughters are being carried like young children.
When you see this, your faces will glow.
Your hearts will beat fast and beat with pride.**

**Treasures from over the sea
and the wealth of nations will be brought to you.
Your country will be covered with caravans of young camels
from Midian and Ephah.
And the people of Sheba will bring gold and spices
in praise of the LORD.**

The word of the Lord.

How might you feel if a bright light unexpectedly shone and the world suddenly become brighter? This is how the Israelites saw Jerusalem: as a bright light. A city that once seemed to have no hope and no future, but with the Lord's help the brightness and glory returned. What made the world dark in the first place? Wars, hatred, and enslavement were some of the evils of the time. When the Israelites saw Jerusalem as the light which got brighter and lit up a dark world, then other nations began to see this light and were drawn to it. These nations included many non-Jewish people like us. We are called Gentiles and we too were drawn to this bright light and the Lord who brought it.

Why do you think we light candles at Christmas time?

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This week's **Responsorial Psalm (72:1,2, 10abc, 10de-11)** tells us that everyone on earth will adore the Lord because of what he has done for his people.

R/: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Please help the king
to be honest and fair
just like you, our God.

R/: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Let him be honest and fair
with all your people
especially the poor.

R/: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you. . . .

What kind of King or leader are the people looking for? **Honest and fair like God.**

Why is this important? **There have been *too many cruel Kings and leaders.***

What King are they looking for? (hint: What king was born on Christmas Day?)

The next reading is from the letter of St Paul to the **Ephesians (3:2-3a,5-6)**. After Jesus' death St. Paul became an important disciple of Jesus. He travelled all over to inform the people about Christ and the word of God. During that time he often wrote to the people in various important cities telling them what was happening. Ephesus was an large city in what is now north western Turkey. Today's letter was about God's plan of salvation.

Brothers and sisters:

You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace

That was given to me for your benefit,

. . .

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.

The word of the Lord.

This reading is especially important because it shows us how God's plan of salvation includes us Gentiles as joint heirs, joint members, joint partners with the Jewish people in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The final reading below is the **Gospel (Matthew 2:1-12)**. Be sure to notice the words printed in bold type. It reveals the story of the Magi and how they journeyed to Bethlehem and discovered the importance of the Baby Jesus and where he was born. They were wise men from the East searching to find the king, Christ Jesus. At that time Herod was the Roman assigned ruler King of Judea the region where Bethlehem was located. He was afraid of the birth of this very special baby who was to become King according to the prophets and chief priests. This king was to shepherd his people "Israel" which meant that he would become a great leader. Herod was so greedy for power and his fear so great that he intended to kill the baby Jesus so that this could not happen.

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When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem *in Judea*,
Herod was king.

During this time some ***wise men from the east***
came to Jerusalem and said,

“Where is the child born to be ***king of the Jews?***
We ***saw his star in the east*** and have come to worship him.”

When ***King Herod*** heard about this, he ***was worried***,
and so was everyone else in Jerusalem.
Herod brought together all the chief priests and the teachers
of the Law of Moses and asked them,
“Where will the Messiah be born?”

They told him,
“***He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote,***
‘Bethlehem in the land of Judea,
you are very important among the towns of Judea.
From your town will come a leader,
Who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.’”

Herod secretly called in the wise men
and asked them when they had first seen the star.

He told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child.
As soon as you find him, let me know.
I want to go and worship him too.”

The wise men listened to what the king said and then left.
And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them
until it stopped over the place where the child was.
They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

(continued below)

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When the men went into the house
and ***saw the child with Mary, his mother,***
they knelt down and ***worshipped him.***
They took out their gifts ***gold, frankincense, and myrrh***
and gave them to him.
Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod
and they went back home by another road.

The Gospel of the Lord



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QUESTIONS

1. Who were the first people to visit the infant Jesus?

2. Why were the shepherds the first? How did they get there so fast?

3. Who were the Magi? Why is that important?

4. Who was Herod?

5. Is Herod a good King like the one described in Psalm 72? Why or why not?

6. What is Herod afraid of?

7. What gifts did the Magi bring for Jesus? Why did they bring these particular gifts?

8. Why did the Magi decide not to go back to Herod after seeing the infant Jesus?

9. Why did they take a different route home?

10. Like the Magi we want to show our love. Jesus asks us to honor our parents. What present can you give Jesus that shows him that you love him and you love and honor your family?

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ANSWERS

1. Who were the first people to visit the infant Jesus?
The Shepherds were the first to visit the infant Jesus.

2. Why were the shepherds the first? How did they get there so fast?
They were Jewish and believed in the coming of the Messiah (Christ)
They lived near Bethlehem.

3. Who were the Magi? - *Astrologers*
Why is that important? The Magi came from far away. They needed to understand how the stars moved in the sky. They were also Not Jewish! They were gentiles; just as we are!

It is important because the Magi were Gentiles (non-Jews) who came to Jewish land to see the baby Jesus. In this way belief in Christ was given to people of many different beliefs not just the Hebrews (Israelites).

4. Who was Herod?
King of Judea

5. Is Herod a good King like the one described in Psalm 72? Why or why not?
No! He lies to the magi and wants to kill Jesus.

6. What is Herod afraid of?
He wants to keep his power and is afraid of losing it to Jesus.

7. What gifts did the Magi bring for Jesus? – gold, frankincense and myrrh.
These gifts were very important and very expensive. They showed everyone how much the wise men thought of the baby Jesus.
Gold meant they honored Jesus as King. Frankincense was more valuable than gold and was burned in honor of God. It shows us Jesus is God. Myrrh is a holy anointing oil used to prepare a man for burial. It tells us he was man and would suffer and die

8. Why did the Magi decide not to go back to Herod after seeing the infant Jesus?
They believed that Herod was evil and would harm them or the baby.

9. Why did they take a different route home?
So Herod would not find them.

10. Like the Magi we want to show our love. Jesus asks us to honor our parents. What present can you give Jesus that shows him you love him and you love and honor your family?
Perhaps something like this: I promise to help wash the dishes after dinner.

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Children's Liturgy of the **W**ord
January 2, 2022