

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Christmas is over for the contemporary secular society but for us Catholic Christians there is still more to celebrate and contemplate in this awe-filled season. We still keep our Christmas tree up and other decorations in their proper places until the feast of the baptism of the Lord.

This Sunday marks the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Epiphany is a Greek word which means revelation or manifestation. Today's feast brings us to celebrate God's revelation to the entire world. The readings for our celebration highlight this truth that Christ's birth is for all humanity and not only for the chosen people of Israel.

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah foretold that all nations and people would be drawn to the light of Jerusalem. The prophet Isaiah urged the people of Jerusalem to arise and shine and attract all people to the splendor of God's glory. He envisioned that people from across the globe shall come into God's presence bearing gifts in their hands. In the responsorial psalm, the psalmist proclaims that every nation on earth will adore the Lord.

The gospel from Mathew recounts the visit of the Magi who came from the far-East to pay homage to the Christ Child. The Magi are also called the "three wise men" or the "three kings". Tradition tells us that they were astronomers and named as Caspar, Melchior and Balthassar.

The Magi saw a star and they tried to discover the meaning behind it. They followed the star and it guided them first to Jerusalem and finally to Bethlehem where they found the new born child lying in a manger with his mother Mary. The Magi prostrated themselves and paid homage to the Christ Child. They offered Him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts are symbolic. They symbolize the three-fold mission of Christ: his divine kingship, priesthood, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. The Magi departed to their country by another route, after being warned in a dream not to return to king Herod who was overcome by the darkness of evil and sought to kill the Christ Child.

The journey of the Magi has valuable lessons for us. All of us are spiritual seekers. We are on a faith journey searching for God and desiring to see His face. Our spiritual journey has its unexpected turns and challenges. Sometimes our guiding star seems to dim or disappear. The clouds of doubts, anxiety, and despair grip us. Like the Magi, we too need to be persistent and walk together as pilgrims of hope.

Saint Paul reminds us in the second reading that we are coheirs, members of the same body and sharers in Christ's promise through the gospel. He urges us to dwell in the wonderful light of Christ.

Epiphany encourages us to walk together as companions of faith and support one another in all aspect of life. It calls us to trust in God's saving power to guide us into the future. In this new year, let us keep our eyes fixed on the Lord and offer Him the best of ourselves, bringing our gold, frankincense, and myrrh in service to Him and others. Let us ask God to bless us in His love and grace to be little epiphanies and a star for those around us and all we may encounter each day in our lives.

God bless,
Fr. Dr. Ben