



LIVING THE GOSPEL



**The Epiphany of The Lord
January 04th 2026**

Theme: "Where is the infant king of the Jews?"

Gathering Prayer

All: O God, who on this day revealed your Only Begotten Son to the nations by the guidance of a star, grant in your mercy that we, who know you already by faith, may be brought to behold the beauty of your sublime glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matt 2:1-12

¹ After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. ² 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' ³ When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. ⁴ He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

*⁶ And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
You are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
For out of you will come a leader
Who will shepherd my people Israel'.*

⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, ⁸ and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' ⁹ Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ The sight of the star filled them with delight, ¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Gospel Focus

As someone preparing to proclaim the Scriptures, it probably seems natural to think that our words play an important role in witnessing to the gospel. However, it is our actions that provide the foundation from which our words spring forth. The magiis

today's gospel do not speak very much, but they also do not need to-their actions speak loud enough. They recognize the star of Bethlehem, and seeing it in the distance, they leave everything and follow it from miles away, trusting that something important would lie at the end of their journey. That action demonstrates faith, belief in that which they have not seen. When they do speak, their words testify to their action and to God's. "We saw his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." In their journey to Bethlehem, the magi demonstrate that they know who Jesus is and are willing to follow him.

Gospel Reflection

The struggle to recognize an equal dignity in those who are not like us is a very human one. The community for which Matthew's Gospel was written, which was predominantly Jewish, struggled to welcome Gentile believers. This is the gospel in which Jesus emphatically warns his disciples, when he sends them out on mission, not to go anywhere near Gentiles or Samaritans but only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"

This is also the community that told the story of the Canaanite woman whom Jesus rebuffed when she pleaded with him to heal her daughter. He declared that he had been "sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). Her faithful persistence helped him to see that his mission could embrace others beyond the borders of his own people. This openness to people beyond the Jews reaches a climax at the conclusion of the gospel, where the final words of the risen Christ are his instruction to go and make disciples of all nations. (28:19).

This all-inclusive mission of Christ is already foreshadowed in the opening chapters of the gospel, where exotic visitors from the East are first to do homage to Jesus. The term *magi* originally referred to a caste of Persian priests. They were not kings themselves but served their king with skills such as interpreting dreams. In the gospel they also appear to be adept at interpreting the movement of stars. Following the star, they are the first Gentiles to seek and recognize Jesus, offering their precious gifts to him. In so doing, they foreshadow the way Gentiles will flock to the Christian communities, bearing gifts for mission.

All the readings for today's feast underscore the welcome extended to all in God's embrace. Isaiah speaks of how peoples from every nation will stream toward the renewed Jerusalem, all bearing their gifts and proclaiming God's praises. The responsorial psalm likewise sings of how every nation on earth will adore God's Anointed One. The letter to the Ephesians emphasizes that "the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel" (3:6). There are no second-class members and no privileges for those who had priority in the faith. All are equal co-members.

The very insistence on the equal status of Gentiles, backed up with the assertion that this has now been revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit, reveals the struggles of the early church of the early Christian communities to make this a reality. Today, the difficulties in welcoming Gentiles have long ago been overcome, but other challengers still face us. What welcome is given to people of different races? to people of different socioeconomic strata? to women? Facing our prejudices and working to dismantle them is a most difficult task. It can take a lifetime, but it is possible to do with the help of the Spirit, who continues to reveal the co-partnership of all in the body of Christ.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading — Isaiah 60: 1-6

¹ Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising on you, ² though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples. Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. ³ The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness. ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look round: all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and your daughters being tenderly carried. ⁵ At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you, the wealth of the nations come to you; ⁶ camels in the throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord.

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 71:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

R: All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. **(R)**

In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. **(R)**

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall serve him. **(R)**

For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. **(R)**

Second Reading — Ephesians 3: 2-3, 5-6

² You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, ³ and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery, as I have just described it very shortly.

⁵ This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; ⁶ it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

486. The Father's only Son, conceived as man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, is "Christ", that is to say, anointed by the Holy Spirit, from the beginning of his human existence, though the manifestation of this fact takes place only progressively: to the shepherds, to the magi, to John the Baptist, to the disciples.(Cf. Mt 1:20; 2:1-12; Lk 1:35; 2:8-20; Jn 1:3 1-34; 2:11) Thus the whole life of Jesus Christ will make manifest "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power."(Acts 10:38)

528. The *Epiphany* is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (*magi*) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee.(Mt 2:1; cf. LH, Epiphany, Evening Prayer II, Antiphon at the Canticle of Mary) In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of

David, the one who will be king of the nations.(Cf Mt 2:2; Num 24:17-19; Rev 22:16) Their coming means that pagans can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Savior of the world only by turning towards the Jews and receiving from them the messianic promise as contained in the Old Testament.(Cf Jn 4 22; Mt 2:4-6) The Epiphany shows that "the full number of the nations" now takes its "place in the family of the patriarchs", and acquires *Israelitica dignitas*(St. Leo the Great, Sermo 3 in epiphanias Domini 1-3, 5: PL 54, 242; LH, Epiphany, OR; Roman Missal, Easter Vigil 26, Prayer after the third reading) (is made "worthy of the heritage of Israel").

Sharing and Discussion

1. Where do you now seek Christ most deeply—in silence, in the Eucharist, in Scripture, or in the events of daily life? What draws you to meet Him in this way at this season of your life?
2. The Magi traveled a great distance and faced many hardships to find Jesus. What "long journey" or difficult sacrifice are you currently making—or hesitant to make—to follow God's leading?
3. Standing with the Magi before the Child, what do you find yourself offering the Lord today? How has this offering changed from earlier seasons of your faith?

Closing Prayer

Leader: Loving God, our needs are no secret to you, yet we voice them knowing you always listen. Hear the prayers we raise today, We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen