



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

Family Faith Focus

Volume 8, Issue 23

January 5, 2020

Dates to Remember

- January 5: Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord
Children's Liturgy of the Word, 10:30 AM Mass
- January 12: Feast of the Baptism of the Lord—
FCFF Liturgy and Formation Session,
8:00-10:30 AM

Jesus Comes for All

Today we celebrate the Epiphany, that is, the “manifestation” of the Lord. This Solemnity is tied to the biblical narrative of the coming of the Magi from the East to Bethlehem in order to pay homage to the King of the Jews. This precise moment was the first “manifestation” of Christ to the nations. Thus, the Epiphany brings to the fore the universal opening of the salvation brought by Jesus. The liturgy today acclaims: “Lord, every nation on earth will adore you,” because Jesus came for us all, for every nation, for everyone! *He is the Epiphany.* He, Jesus Christ, is the manifestation of God's love. He is with us. The Lord is calling you, seeking you, waiting for you. And this is the love of God.

—Pope Francis

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Matthew 2: 1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

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.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sunday Gospel Connection: January 5, 2020

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, Cycle A

Matthew 2: 1-12

Gospel Background: The visit of the Magi occurs directly before the story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Matthew's Gospel tells a version of Jesus' birth that is different than the one in Luke. Of the actual birth of Jesus, Matthew tells us little more than, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod . . ." The story of the census is found only in Luke's Gospel, but we hear about the visit of the Magi only in Matthew's Gospel.



We know little about the Magi. They come from the East and journey to Bethlehem, following an astrological sign, so we believe them to be astrologers. We assume that there were three Magi based upon the naming of their three gifts. The Gospel does not say how many Magi paid homage to Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, they represent the Gentiles' search for a savior. Because the Magi represent the entire world, they also represent our search for Jesus.

We have come to consider the gifts they bring as a foreshadowing of Jesus' role in salvation. We believe the meaning of the gifts to be Christological. Gold is presented as representative of Jesus' kingship. Frankincense is a symbol of his divinity because priests burned the substance in the Temple. Myrrh, which was used to prepare the dead for burial, is offered in anticipation of Jesus' death.

The word Epiphany means "manifestation" or "showing forth." Historically several moments in Christ's early life and ministry have been celebrated as "epiphanies," including his birth in Bethlehem, the visit of the Magi, his baptism by John, and his first miracle at Cana.

Family Connection: The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas is thought by some to be rooted in the gift giving of the Magi. In many cultures, gifts are not exchanged at Christmas, but rather on the feast of the Epiphany. Whenever you exchange your Christmas gifts, take some time to reflect on this tradition of gift giving at Christmas. Think of the best gift you have received. What was it? What made it special? Was it the gift itself, the thought that went into it, or the person who gave it to you?

Read today's Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12. The gifts of the Magi—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—have come to be understood as symbols of Christ's royalty, divinity, and eventual suffering and death. They are special because in giving them, the Magi acknowledge who Jesus was to be: our Savior. We pray that we will acknowledge Jesus as Savior in all that we do and say. Conclude by singing together "We Three Kings."

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

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<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/epiphany-of-the-lord-sunday-connection>

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Psalm 72

Christmas Eve Family Liturgy

What a wonderful way to begin our celebration of Christmas with so many of our families present at our 3:30 PM Christmas Eve Liturgy!

AnnaLisa Cotton and Jordan Vallejo, 3rd grade level FCFF students, portrayed Mary and Joseph, looking for a place to stay in Bethlehem to welcome the birth of Jesus, during the narration of *The Posada*.



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Make Us Magi

Lord of heaven and earth,
having made known your plan of salvation,
you now send us to live and share the Gospel.
To those who yearn to penetrate the
darkness
and to walk by your light, make us Magi.
Make us people who testify to the light,

who stand fast in the face of fear
and hostility,
who bow down in your presence,
and who set our gifts before you.
Make us Magi.
Make us resolute witnesses, living signs,
and true worshippers.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 5, 2020

We Must Be Magi



Today's Readings: Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12. Today we hear how God's light will radiate from his sacred city, Jerusalem, drawing to it the eyes and then the people of every nation on earth. Jews scattered during foreign invasions will return to their homeland. Gentiles, including kings, will join them, bringing incense to burn and animals to offer. They will build up the Temple and praise the Lord, the one true God.

The Magi were Gentiles who looked up and saw a great light. They set forth toward it, bringing gifts to offer, but their path did not lead to Jerusalem. It led instead to Bethlehem, a tiny village. No one at all joined them. The small house they entered was nothing like the Temple. And

the only king they encountered, King Herod, wanted the star they followed to darken and disappear.

Nevertheless, when the Magi presented their gifts and prostrated themselves, the prophecy of our first reading began to be fulfilled. In humble surroundings, God's plan of salvation was at last revealed. This plan did not unfold in the way people expected, but then God usually fulfills his promises in ways that startle and even frighten us.

Despite the fear and hostility they encountered, the Magi followed the light and venerated the Lord. We must be like them. We must be Magi. We must move toward the light, bearing witness and paying homage to the Lord who has come among us.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 6 A Great Light

The crowds that flock to Jesus are drawn to his light. They recognize that, in Jesus, truth and goodness walk among them. By healing and casting out demons Jesus incarnates God's kingdom; he brings it about in the midst of the people. Today he shares his Spirit with all who follow him so that we might be healed of whatever afflicts us and remain with God forever. Make a list of things that cause people to suffer. Use this list to pray for healing and peace in our world. *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:22–4:6; Psalm 2:7bc–8, 10–12a; Matthew 4:12–17, 23–25.*

Tuesday, January 7 Hungers

Today we again hear how Jesus incarnates God's love, this time by feeding a large crowd. Everyone in the crowd faced the constant threat of hunger. Their crops could fail or their land could be taken from them. Jesus' gift of bread points to life in God's kingdom, where no one will ever hunger again. Share God's love today by volunteering at a food pantry or homeless shelter. *Today's Readings: 1 John 4:7–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4, 7–8; Mark 6:34–44.*

Wednesday, January 8 Fears

In the ancient world, the sea represented death. The chaotic waters of the sea reminded people of the vast, dark emptiness that preceded God's creation. Jesus reveals his divine power over death by walking effortlessly across the surface of the sea. However, his disciples, easily frightened by stormy waters, become fearful of the one who strides across them. They are imperfect in their love for Jesus. We, too, might be amazed by what God has done yet hesitate to entrust ourselves to our Savior. Talk with God about what keeps you from drawing closer to him. *Today's Readings: 1 John 4:11–18; Psalm 72:1–2, 10, 12–13; Mark 6:45–52.*

Thursday, January 9 Lighten the Load

Some days we may doubt that our faith will triumph over evil. We may struggle to believe that virtuous behavior enacted in patience, mercy, and humility will prevail over sin. At such times, obeying God's commandment to love others might feel burdensome. Yet the weight bearing down on us is the pain or anger we cling to instead of welcoming the freedom that Jesus proclaims and shares with us. Embrace the freedom Christ offers us by praying St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Suscipe*. *Today's Readings: 1 John 4:19–5:4; Psalm 72:1–2, 14 and 15bc, 17; Luke 4:14–22a.*

Friday, January 10 New Life

Leprosy forced people to leave their families and community. A leper's isolation must have felt like a living death. Therefore, Jesus didn't only heal the leper physically, he also restored to him the life he had lost. The leper's new physical life points to the eternal life that God's Son offers everyone who believes in him. Draw a picture or imagine what life was like for the leper both before and after he met Jesus. Reflect on how Jesus has changed your life. *Today's Readings: 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Luke 5:12–16.*

Saturday, January 11 Our Testimony

Today we hear the end of two testimonies. The First Letter of John, written so that we will enter into fellowship with God, concludes by urging us to remain in the truth. In the Gospel passage, John the Baptist points once again to Jesus before stepping out of the spotlight. Both testimonies direct our attention to God's Son and through him, to the Father. Both testimonies warn us to withstand whatever tempts us to separate ourselves from God. Renew your baptismal promises today as a way of showing your rejection of evil and your commitment to God. *Today's Readings: 1 John 5:14–21; Psalm 149:1–2, 3–4, 5 and 6a and 9b; John 3:22–30.*

