



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

Family Faith Focus

Volume 9, Issue 23

January 3, 2021

Dates to Remember

- January 2: 4:00 PM Mass
- January 3: 9:00 AM Mass
- Please see our parish website for reservation information and links to view Sunday or weekday Masses online.

The Path to Jesus

In order to find Jesus, we need to follow a different path, the path of humble love. Today's Gospel ends by saying that the Magi, after encountering Jesus, "left for their own country by another road." Another road, different from that of Herod and that of the world, like the road taken by those who surround Jesus at Christmas: Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. Like the Magi, they left home and became pilgrims on the paths of God. Those who leave behind their worldly attachments undertake a journey to find the mystery of God. It is not enough to know where Jesus was born, as the scribes did, if we do not go there. It is not enough to know that Jesus was born, like Herod, if we do not encounter him.

— 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 3, 2021

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, Cycle B

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/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/epiphany-of-the-lord-sunday-connection/>

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Psalms 72

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



At Our Rising

God of glory,
at its rising, the star drew Magi
who traveled to Jerusalem
bearing gifts for your Son.
At his rising, your Son appeared
to his followers,
who traveled to distant lands
bearing the gift of salvation for everyone.
At our rising each day may we, your people,

move forward in faith and hope.
May we become gifts for each other,
gifts that enrich, that guide, heal, console,
and uplift
so that at our rising from the dead
you may receive us into the light of your
eternal glory.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 3, 2021

One God, One People



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.
When God led his people out of Egypt, they believed in the existence of many gods. In the centuries that followed, they would come to know that there was only one God, the Lord of heaven and earth. The First Reading reveals that not only the Jews but all people come to believe in the Lord alone. People from all across the world bring gifts and sacrifices to Jerusalem to pay homage to the one true God.

The arrival of the Magi in Jerusalem fulfills Isaiah's prophecy. By undertaking the long journey to pay homage to the newborn king, these Gentiles venerate the God of Israel. They reveal that "the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the

same body." In Christ, God invites all people to share in his divine life and glory.

The revelation we celebrate today is thus not only about who God is, it is also about the people God empowers us to become. The images in Isaiah's prophecy portray people acting in unity, in harmony, and with a common purpose. They praise God, which means they acknowledge all that God is and embrace all that God stands for: kindness, patience, compassion, truth, mercy, justice. As we pay homage to the newborn king and strive to imitate his selfless love, we become part of this epiphany, part of God's great love, and we help others who are lost in the darkness to find and follow the light.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 4 Still Shining

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, whom we celebrate today, was the first person from the United States to be canonized. She also founded the first Catholic school for girls and the Sisters of Charity. St. Elizabeth found ways to participate in the ministry of Jesus, spread God's kingdom, and keep the light of Christ shining. Learn more about St. Elizabeth. Ask for her intercession as you discern how you can more fully receive and share the light of Christ. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 3:22—4:6; Psalm 2:7bc–8, 10–12a; Matthew 4:12–17, 23–25.

Tuesday, January 5 This Is Love

God's love is boundless and tireless. God loved us into existence. God incarnated his love in Jesus, who revealed God's love in every aspect of his ministry, from urging love for our enemies to healing and feeding people. Through Christ, God loves us into eternal life. If we have received this love, our lives will overflow with love for others. Share God's love today by volunteering at a soup kitchen or visiting someone who is sick or homebound. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 4:7–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4, 7–8; Mark 6:34–44.

Wednesday, January 6 Perfecting Love

We're told that "there is no fear in love," and yet the disciples are terrified of Jesus as he strides toward them on the surface of the sea. We love God, and yet we are frightened of his power, his greatness, and even his love. The more we encounter God's love, the more imperfect we feel. Our fears will fade only when we accept God's love, when we welcome that love and remain in it every day, every hour, every moment of our lives. Meditate on a crucifix or other image of God's love. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 4:11–18; Psalm 72:1–2, 10, 12–13; Mark 6:45–52.

Thursday, January 7 Look Around

St. John insists that our love for God, whom we do not see, must overflow into love for others, whom we do see. Too often, however, we don't see the people who most need our love. Jesus points them out in today's Gospel passage: they are people in prisons, homeless shelters, treatment centers, orphanages, and nursing homes. They live in the poorest part of town, the places we never see, the places we won't go. Look at a map of where you live. Who are all the "hidden" people in your area? *Today's Readings:* 1 John 4:19—5:4; Psalm 72:1–2, 14 and 15bc, 17; Luke 4:14–22a.

Friday, January 8 Sharing in the Victory

Eternal life flows from God the Father through his Son to the world. The leper who met Jesus experienced this new life. All that he suffered—physical pain, loneliness, hunger, sorrow—was lifted from him at the word and gentle touch of Jesus. What in your life needs to be healed, cleansed, and restored? Pray Psalm 130, and imitate the leper by prostrating yourself before the Lord. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Luke 5:12–16.

Saturday, January 9 Belong to God

As we conclude our reading of the First Letter of John, we are reminded that sin and evil persist in our world. God's Son became human and shares his light and life with us, yet even we who are baptized in his name sometimes fall back into sin. We continue to need his light, his word, his Church. During the Sacrament of Reconciliation, celebrate all the ways God has incarnated his love in your life. Ask forgiveness for those times when you have failed to receive and to share this love. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 5:14–21; Psalm 149:1–2, 3–4, 5 and 6a and 9b; John 3:22–30.

