

Wednesday Jan 3, for the Epiphany of the Lord

OPENING PRAYER: O Light of Lights, you showed forth the light of God’s love to all nations. In your coming, God’s saving love is revealed from east to west. You have made us co-heirs and sharers in the promise of salvation. Illuminate our minds and hearts with your love. May we, like the Magi, always seek and search for you. Enlighten us as we contemplate your Word today. We pray in your light and in your love. Amen.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 2: 1-12

The Visit of the Magi.*

1 When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,* behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem,
2 saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star* at its rising and have come to do him homage.”^a
3 When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
4 Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.*
5^b They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

6 ‘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.’”

7 Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance.

8 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.”

9 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.

10 They were overjoyed at seeing the star,

11*^c 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.

12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Notes:

* [[2:1–12](#)] The future rejection of Jesus by Israel and his acceptance by the Gentiles are retrojected into this scene of the narrative.

* [[2:1](#)] In the days of King Herod: Herod reigned from 37 to 4 B.C. Magi: originally a designation of the Persian priestly caste, the word became used of those who were regarded as having more than human knowledge.

Matthew’s magi are astrologers.

* [[2:2](#)] We saw his star: it was a common ancient belief that a new star appeared at the time of a ruler’s birth. Matthew also draws upon the Old Testament story of Balaam, who had prophesied that “A star shall advance from Jacob” ([Nm 24:17](#)), though there the star means not an astral phenomenon but the king himself.

* [[2:4](#)] Herod’s consultation with the chief priests and scribes has some similarity to a Jewish legend about the child Moses in which the “sacred scribes” warn Pharaoh about the imminent birth of one who will deliver Israel from Egypt and the king makes plans to destroy him.

* [[2:11](#)] Cf. [Ps 72:10, 15](#); [Is 60:6](#). These Old Testament texts led to the interpretation of the magi as kings.

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. The Magi symbolize our search for God and meaning in life. What gives meaning to your life? Has some recent discovery or new passion brought new meaning and depth to your life?
2. In the Epiphany, Jesus is manifested to the Magi and Gentile world. Can you name a recent epiphany experience in your life, a recent discovery?
3. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

Commentary

The Gospel is the fulfillment of the first reading Isaiah 60:1-6, which speaks of all the nations streaming to Jerusalem bearing gifts for the new King. The Magi represent the non-Jewish world who are seekers of God in their own way. The Magi's journey to Bethlehem in search of the new King is symbolic of the journey all seekers must take. Thus, Epiphany is not only a feast on which we celebrate God's manifestation of himself to the Gentile world, but also our movement toward God.

When Matthew is writing his Gospel in 80AD, his own people have almost totally rejected Jesus while large groups of Gentiles are accepting him. This rejection/acceptance dynamic is present in today's Gospel. While Herod's plot to kill Jesus symbolizes Israel's rejection of Jesus, the Magi's acceptance of Jesus symbolizes the Gentiles' movement toward Jesus. This rejection/acceptance dynamic will be played out many times in Matthew's Gospel. While the Pharisees will close their hearts to Jesus, the Gentiles will open their hearts to him.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom
Wednesday, Jan 3 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday

Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting

Time: Jan 3, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZIkD-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigb_zziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjjb_UbH7opMcL8

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86903804010?pwd=MGJydS9qSW9LSzNGbIZSM2xZcWpGZz09>

Meeting ID: 869 0380 4010

Passcode: 086586

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