

CELEBRATING THE MANIFESTATION OF THE LORD

**We give you thanks for Your beloved Child, Jesus,
Who You made known to the magi from the east,
who knew of Him only what the silent stars could tell.**

**You have drawn us again to His feet
and in Him we have found the fulfillment of all our searching.**



**As we celebrate the feast of the manifestation of the Lord Jesus to the
Gentiles through the magi, we pause and remember that our God is a God for
all peoples and a Light for all nations. He holds each of us close to His heart.**

ISAIAH 60: 1-6

**Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
“Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the arm.
Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,
to you the riches of the nations will come.
Herds of camels will cover your land,
young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.**



HYMN: SHINE, JESUS, SHINE

**Lord the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth You now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.**

**Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;**

**Send forth Your Word, Lord And let there be light.
As we gaze on Your Kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness,
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.
Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth Your Word, Lord And let there be light.**

MATTHEW 2: 1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

**"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will be the shepherd of my people
Israel."**

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

REFLECTION

Matthew writes that Magi from the east came to Jerusalem. Magi from where? From the East. Probably from modern day Iraq or somewhere close by. Not exactly a popular Jewish holiday destination. They probably wouldn't have aroused quite the fear that a modern day Iraqi arriving a Jerusalem



asking for directions to the local maternity hospital would, but they still wouldn't have been especially welcome in the first century.

God's love respects none of our boundaries. Not only is it suspicious strangers who come seeking God's anointed one, when, as the story makes clear, the local religious experts have got no idea that he's arrived, but the story goes on to make it clear that these suspicious strangers have got a pretty clear idea who Jesus is and how he should be honored. The gifts that they bring are both a fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah about the gifts to be brought from foreign places to honor God's chosen King, but they are also rich symbols about who He is and what lies ahead of Him. Gold is always the gift for kings. Frankincense is the gift offered to God, a fragrant marker of the presence of God in our midst. And myrrh is a spice that is added to the oil used for anointing priests, and it is also used as a pain killer and an embalming spice. So Matthew's description of their gift giving is a clear announcement: this is God's Anointed One, the Messiah. This is the Supreme Ruler of the world, God with us, and also God's Suffering Servant Who will face pain and death in bringing the Light of God's love into the world.

God never promised that the Good News wouldn't cause trouble, and when the lights begin to go on and people begin to comprehend who this Baby is and what His arrival is going to mean for the world, all hell can break loose. But Jesus died to get that light and that promise of God's all inclusive love through to you and me. God loves you and will stop at nothing to get that message to sink in and begin lighting up your life. And now, as people who constantly affirm that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, the challenge to us is to become bearers of that Light too. God is calling us to become an epiphany, to become a revelation of God's love and transforming power in the world. It is this message and this challenge – this epiphany – that we celebrate.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Our heavenly Father has rescued us from darkness, and brought us into His wonderful Light through His Son Jesus Christ. We pray to Him that His Light may shine in the darkness of our world.

Response: LORD of LIGHT, HEAR US!

***for those who pass on the message of the Gospel, we pray:**

***for missionaries, both in other countries and here at home, we pray:**

***for all nations, that the Light of Christ shines on them, we pray:**

***for our own nation, that our leaders and people pursue peace and justice, we pray:**

***for those who say they are Christians but do not practice their faith, we pray:**

***for those who are wealthy, that they share their wealth as a gift to the poor, we pray:**

***for ourselves that we share our giftedness, our light and our love with others, we pray:**

***for each of us that we may follow the Star of Faith and reverence God in our everyday life, we pray:**

(Light a candle representing Christ, our Light.)

REVELATION 21: 23–24

**And the city has no need of sun or moon on it,
for the glory of God is its Light, and its Lamp is the Lamb.
The nations will walk by its Light,
and the rulers of the earth will bring their glory into it.**

O Finality.

O final Light.

**O luminous One,
outshining lamp, stars and sun.**

O End of Night.

O Day's Light without ending.

**O Light, all light,
outshining lamp, stars and sun.**

Break forth, O heavenly Light, and reign to the ages of ages.

Shine forever and let no more greed or hatred near.

**Illumine and save all creation,
outshining lamp, stars and sun.**

O Light, we shall see face to face.

O Radiancy, we shall ever bear upon our foreheads.

**O Splendor of Love, the world of greed and hatred ending,
outshining lamp, stars and sun.**

PRAYER

Lord God,

you revealed your only Son to the nations by the leading of a star.

Lead us, who know You now by faith, to see you in Your glory.

**We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and
reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

**Go now, seek out the Christ wherever He may be found,
and share the Good News with all who bear Him no ill will.**

**Bring light to those in thick darkness,
a voice to those no one speaks for,
and hope to those no one cares for.**

And may God make you a sharer in the Promised Light.

May Christ Jesus fill you with his sense of what is right.

**And may the Holy Spirit be to you like rain
that gives life to the fertile earth.**

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, In the name of our God Who is Creator and Parent, in the name of the Son Who is our Light and Redeemer, and in the name of the Spirit most Holy Who calls us to the Light. Amen.

HYMN: CHRIST BE OUR LIGHT

**Longing for light, we wait to see You..
Longing for truth, we turn to You.
Make us Your own, Your holy people,
Light for the world to see.**

Chorus:

**Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our Light! Shine in your Church.**

**Longing for peace, our world is
troubled.**

**Longing for hope, many despair.
Your Word alone has power to save
us**

Make us your living voice.

Chorus

**Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for
others,**

Shared until all are fed.

Chorus

**Longing for shelter people are
homeless.**

**Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
Walls made of living stone.**

Chorus

**Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.**

**Let us be servants to one another,
Making your kingdom come.**

Chorus



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to honor the Christ with the gifts of our lives, our talents and our time.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!