

CELEBRATING EPIPHANY: THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us.
Luke 1:78

The day of Epiphany directs our attention to the manifestation or appearance of God, the true Light that is Christ shining upon the world. The Greek word epiphany itself means “to show,” “make known,” “to reveal,” or, as suggested in the words of Luke 1:78, “to break upon us.” Its origins are found in the Eastern Church, where connections were made to the Nativity, the Baptism of the Lord, and the Miracle of Jesus’ changing of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. The Western Church later linked this day to the visit of Magi or kings, which has since become the more dominant theme. It is commonly referred to as “Three Kings Day.” In all of these examples, Jesus is revealed anew in a particular way: through birth, voice of God and descending Spirit, miracle, or star. While Christmas marks the coming of God to us, Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity.



Living continually in God’s presence,
Come, let us adore the Word made flesh.
Come and worship Him Who manifested Himself
as the Light of the World and the Son of God..



Father, by the leading of a star You manifested Your only Son to the peoples of the earth. Lead us, who know You now by faith, into Your presence, where we may see Your glory face to face. Today give us a glimpse of how truly wonderful, loving and accepting You are. Help us to enjoy You now, tomorrow and each day. As we remember the wise men seeking out Your Son and publicly declaring to the world that He was Your son, give us the freedom to do the same. Give us the courage to adequately praise You and declare to those around us that we are Yours.

We pray all of these things through the strong name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Isaiah 60:1 –6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Psalms 72

**Give the King Your justice, O God, and Your righteousness to the Royal Son!
May He judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice!
In His days may righteousness flourish, and peace abound,
till the moon be no more!**

May He have dominion from sea to sea,

and from the river to the ends of the earth!

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render Him tribute,

may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!

May all kings fall down before Him, all nations serve Him!

For He delivers the needy when they call,

the poor and those who have no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

Gospel – Matthew 2:1 –12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He Who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star at in the East, and have come to worship Him.”

When Herod heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a Ruler, who will govern my people Israel.’”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the Child; and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him.”

When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the Child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother and they fell down and worshipped Him.

Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Reflection

The central image of Epiphany is the Magi following the star who come bearing gifts: Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. These three gifts represent Christ’s priesthood, His kingship, and Jesus’ atoning death. Consider how this trinity of gifts applies to our life in the faith.

It is clear that these gifts are both precious and valuable, while they also are symbols.

Some have seen the Magi’s gifts as representing the gifts we present to Christ. In this case, Gold may represent our money, while Frankincense may stand for our offerings of devotion, and Myrrh may be a symbol for our commitment to remedy the world’s pain and sadness.

Another interpretation represents examples of receiving:

Gold represents God’s gift of hope, the Frankincense symbolizes the gift of faith and Myrrh the gift of love. In St. Paul’s first letter to the people of Corinth, “faith, hope and love” are gifts of the Spirit.

The picture of the Magi's offering their gifts and the Holy Family accepting them invites us to be both receivers and givers. Experience the Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, as representing both our giving, and our receiving. Gifting is a very central Christian characteristic. To be a Christian is to know ourselves as those who have received gifts. All that we have comes from God. Nothing is of our own creation. Yet, we are able to be also generous givers of precious gifts

Read the story of the Magi in this way – from the point of view of a gifted and gift-giving people. Let us see ourselves as members of the extended Holy Family to whom the Magi bring gifts, and as Magi, who offer God and our neighbor that which is precious in our lives. Let us see ourselves as the Body of Christ who both give as Christ gave, and receive as Christ received.

The good gifts that I have given or received always bring three important messages: love, beauty and story.

All well-chosen gifts are acts of love. Any worthy gift is always part of a story. Each caring gift is an act of beauty that feeds our souls. The most meaningful gifts embody all three, love, beauty and story.

This is true of gift giving between God and us and between one another. God's gifts to me are always a part of the ongoing story of my life in God, and the beauty of each gift from my Creator nourishes my soul. Of course every gift from God is a gift of love.

HYMN

**Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star to the wise men from afar;
Branch of royal David's stem in Thy birth at Bethlehem;
Praises be to Thee addressed, God in man made manifest.**

**Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
And at Cana, wedding guest, in Thy Godhead manifest;
Manifest in power divine, changing water into wine;
Praises be to Thee addressed, God in man made manifest.**

**Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord, mirrored in Thy Holy Word;
May we imitate Thee now and be pure as pure art Thou;
That we like to Thee may be at Thy great epiphany;
And may praise Thee, ever blessed, God in man made manifest**



**Lord Jesus, may Your light shine our way,
Lord Jesus as once it guided the steps of the magi:
that we too may be led into Your presence
and worship You,
giving You all the gifts we have to give:
the gifts of our hearts and hands, our voices and our lives.**
**O Child of Mary,
the Word of the Father,
the King of nations,
the Savior of humankind;
May honor and glory be Yours for ever. Amen.**



**Your Epiphany, O Christ,
manifested You as the Savior of all peoples.
Your Epiphany, O Christ,
brought humankind out of darkness into Your glorious light.
Your Epiphany, O Christ,
broke down the barriers between nations and races.
Your Epiphany, O Christ,
brought unity and concord to all peoples.
Your Epiphany, O Christ,
proclaimed goodness and truth to all who welcome You as the Light to
lighten the Gentiles.**

**May the gift of Gold given by the Magi,
renew our obedience to You and Your teachings.**

**May the gift of Frankincense,
stir in us true devotion of You.**

**May the gift of Myrrh,
help us to accept cheerfully all pain and suffering for You.**

**O come, let us kneel and worship You, O Christ,
our Lord of Light and Life.**



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to continually follow the Star of Faith.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!