

The Epiphany of the Lord

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"We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." (Matthew 2:2)

Today is the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. It is originally celebrated on January 6 in the liturgy of the Church, but in many countries it is celebrated on the second Sunday during Christmas Season for pastoral reasons. It is followed by the next Sunday as the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which marks the end of Christmas Season. Then the liturgy of the Ordinary Year B continues for a while until Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. This celebration of the Epiphany has been around for a long time, and the emphasis is on the public appearance of Jesus Christ to all nations as the Savior of mankind. In the Gospel of Matthew, it is manifested by the visit of astrologers who came to worship the King of the Jews born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12).

Jesus shines and attracts as a "new light"

The new light shone on the night of the Nativity of the Lord, attracting the magi as a sign from heaven, and leading them on their journey to Judea. And today, it shines in the world. Christmas Season and the Epiphany of the Lord are characterized by this theme of light, which is probably related to the fact that in the northern hemisphere the days get longer than the nights after the winter solstice. But beyond this difference in geographic location, Christ has his words for all peoples: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Jesus is the sun that has appeared on the horizon of humanity to illuminate each of our existence and lead us all to our destination together, to a world of freedom and peace where we live in full communion with God and one another.

Today's First and Second Readings

Isaiah the prophet calls out to the city of Jerusalem, which we can replace with "the church": "Arise! Shine, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. Though darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds, the peoples, upon you the Lord will dawn, and over you his glory will be seen." (Isaiah 60:1-2).

And Paul says, "[The mystery of Christ] has now been revealed to his holy apostles and

prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:5-6) Christ's saving grace to mankind was entrusted to the Church by Christ himself. It is nothing short of a mystery.

This world cannot provide the light for mankind to walk the path. This can be confirmed in our modern situation. Western civilization has lost its direction and seems to be on a journey in search of its destination. But the Church, in light of the Word of God, is able to see through this fog. We may not have reached a solution yet, but our eyes are on the destination. No matter what country or culture we live in, the light of the gospel is shining for everyone.

Three Necessary Attitudes to search for God in the darkness of this world

The magi from the east continued their search for God. Their story teaches us that there is no automatic way to lead us to God. However, there is a way that prepares us for an encounter with Him. No matter how many wonderful speeches we give about God, we cannot encounter Him unless we are truly open to His mystery.

The most important thing to reach God is to sincerely call out to Him from the bottom of your heart. So the question is, will you trust in the mystery of God and open your heart, or will you choose to live as an atheist? It is said that the desert hermit, Charles de Foucault, always began his prayers with his companions as follows: "O God, if you exist, reveal your face to us." This call in the darkness is humble and honest. Isn't it the purest way to make us sensitive to the mystery of God?

In order to turn ourselves to God, it is also important to remove the things in our lives that prevent us from encountering Him. We even have to get rid of some of them from within ourselves. If you don't give up the desire to know everything and understand everything, the desire to fully understand the mystery behind reality, what human beings are, what life is, and what death is, it will be difficult to truly encounter God. As long as we are confined by our own ego and by our indifference and lack of love for others, it will be difficult to open up to God, who is love.

The third and very important attitude is to keep hoping, to keep searching, to keep calling, and to keep waiting. There is no other way to walk toward the mystery of the source of life.

The story of the magi from the east illustrates in many ways the attitudes toward the search for God. They set out on a journey toward the mystery. They were humble enough to listen to overcome the darkest of times. Then they continued their search and encountered God. The

God they found in this way was the incarnate as an infinitely weak human being, a newborn infant lying in a manger.

The Intercession of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph

May the Blessed Virgin Mary help us as we seek to share the joy of God's salvation with others through the witness of our words and lives. With Mary, Star of Evangelization, may we fulfill our mission as the light of the world. And let us seek the protection of St. Joseph, the guardian of the Church. May he protect us as we struggle to overcome the crisis brought by the new coronavirus in this new year.

Prayer

Let us pray with an open heart, as the magi did.

May we discover the new presence of God in the events we encounter each day.

May we tirelessly seek the path of peace and dialogue with other religions, and may we, like the magi, open our hearts to new presence of God.

O God our Father, today's Gospel tells us how the magi from the east found Jesus. May those who seek you, our Father, find you and see the light of your face clearly. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Note: All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE).