

Today in Focus

JANUARY 2 » THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

The greatest love story



When we fall in love with someone, we look for signs that they love us too. We want to show them our love. We shower them with gifts as tokens of our love. We also want it to be reciprocal, a two-way street. That is human nature.

The ancient world placed a lot of emphasis on signs. Sometimes they trusted signs more than the written or spoken word. The Scriptures contain many passages about signs. Today's gospel is full of signs and tokens of love. It is also a love story.

In it we see King Herod and astrologers, people whose job it is to interpret signs, looking for signs in the stars of the promised messiah. Herod sends the astrologers to follow a star and when they do, they find the baby Jesus. Recognizing the fulfillment of God's promise, they are filled with love and shower Jesus with signs of that love in the form of precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

But the greatest love story is in the baby the wise men find. This child is none other than God's only Son, the promised Messiah, the light to guide all of humankind out of darkness. What greater sign of love could God give to the world? Salvation through God's own Son! ● **PATRICK M. DOYLE**

Sunday, January 2

MASS DURING THE DAY

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

(Cf. Malachi 3:1; 1 Chronicles 29:12)

Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

INTRODUCTORY RITES *(page 21)*

COLLECT

O God, who on this day revealed your Only Begotten Son to the nations by the guidance of a star, grant in your mercy that we, who know you already by faith, may be brought to behold the beauty of your

sublime glory.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING *(Isaiah 60:1-6)*

Rise up in splendor,
Jerusalem! Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth,
and thick clouds cover the peoples;
but upon you the LORD shines,
and over you appears

his glory.
Nations shall walk
by your light,
and kings by your
shining radiance.
Raise your eyes
and look about;
they all gather and
come to you:
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters in
the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be
radiant at what you see,
your heart shall throb
and overflow,
for the riches of the sea
shall be emptied out
before you,
the wealth of nations
shall be brought to you.
Caravans of camels
shall fill you,
dromedaries from
Midian and Ephah;
all from Sheba shall come
bearing gold and

frankincense,
and proclaiming the
praises of the LORD.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13)

**R. Lord, every nation on earth
will adore you.**

O God, with your judgment
endow the king,
and with your justice,
the king's son;
he shall govern your
people with justice
and your afflicted ones
with judgment. R.
Justice shall flower
in his days,
and profound peace, till
the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to
the ends of the earth. R.
The kings of Tarshish and
the Isles shall offer gifts;
the kings of Arabia and

Seba shall bring tribute.
 All kings shall pay him
 homage,
 all nations shall serve him.

R

For he shall rescue the
 poor when he cries out,
 and the afflicted when he
 has no one to help him.
 He shall have pity for the
 lowly and the poor;
 the lives of the poor
 he shall save. R

SECOND READING

(Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6)

Brothers and sisters: You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. It was not made known to people in other generations as it 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.
 The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA *(Matthew 2:2)*

Alleluia, alleluia. We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

GOSPEL *(Matthew 2:1-12)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (page 24)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (page 26)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look with favor, Lord,
we pray,

on these gifts of your Church,
 in which are offered now
 not gold or frankincense
 or myrrh,
 but he who by them is
 proclaimed,
 sacrificed and received,
 Jesus Christ.
 Who lives and reigns for ever
 and ever. **Amen.**

PREFACE (*Epiphany, page 28*)

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

(*Cf. Matthew 2:2*)

We have seen his star in the
 East, and have come with
 gifts to adore the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Go before us with heavenly
 light, O Lord,
 always and everywhere,
 that we may perceive with
 clear sight
 and revere with true affection
 the mystery in which

you have willed us to
 participate.
 Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BLESSING & DISMISSAL (*page 50*)



RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The Magi left their familiar environment to seek and honor a Jewish king.

● **How am I being drawn to discover God in new places and situations?**

Jesus, lead me...

SAYING AMEN

In the Collect, we ask that we who know God already by faith may be brought to behold the beauty of God's sublime glory.

● **What is my vision of heaven? What hints of God's sublime glory do I see around me?**

God of glory, thank you...

Living with Christ **This Week**

This week the epiphanies continue as God's mercy is revealed in Jesus and in his ministry. John's first letter weaves together the themes of God's love for us and our love for God, especially as shown by our love for one another. The gospels describe Jesus' ministry of proclamation and of release from evil. Jesus announces the presence of God's kingdom through his wondrous feeding of the crowds and the compassionate healing of those who suffer. ●

PSALM RESPONSE

R *Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.*

This week's psalm response reminds us to come together, praising the Lord of heaven and earth.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Use these intercessions with your prayers this week.

- For those who live in darkness and fear, we pray:
R *Show yourself, Jesus, and save us.*
- For those who feel lost and without direction, we pray: **R**
- For those who are fearful and overcome by life's storms, we pray: **R**
- For captives and the oppressed everywhere, we pray: **R**
- For those who are socially rejected because of their illness, we pray: **R**