

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY*

Isaiah 60:1–6
Ephesians 3:2–3A, 5–6
Matthew 2:1–12

MONDAY

Matthew 4:12–17, 23–25
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

TUESDAY

Mark 6:34–44
“You give them something to eat.”

WEDNESDAY

Mark 6:45–52
“Take heart, it is I.”

THURSDAY

Luke 4:14–22A
“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

FRIDAY

Luke 5:12–16
“Be made clean.”

SATURDAY

John 3:22–30
“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

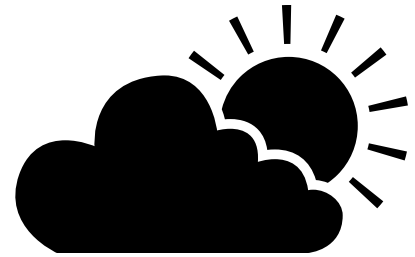
**Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord

Jesus, Light of the Nations

The feast of the Epiphany of the Lord is also sometimes called “Little Christmas.” It is an extension of our celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation—the Word made flesh who came to dwell among us.

This feast celebrates Jesus’ manifestation. The Greek word *epiphania* means precisely a manifestation or a shining out. This is the moment anticipated by the prophet Isaiah who speaks to Jerusalem and announces, “Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you.” Jesus comes among us as light not only for the people of Israel but for all the nations. And Saint Paul is clear about the universal value of Jesus in the second reading from the letter to the Ephesians. Jesus is light for Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Gospel account of the Epiphany contains two important details for our own journeys of faith. The first is that Jesus is revealed to those who



search for him. The Magi, or wise men from the East, set out on a long and arduous journey guided not only by a star but by a hope of encountering the newborn King of the Jews. Their patient and persevering journey and search becomes a model for our own quest to encounter the Lord.

The second detail has to do with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Saint Matthew tells us that the Magi saw the child with his mother. She is holding him and presenting him. Jesus is manifested through the hands of Mary who presents him to the world. The Lord’s manifestation uses human instruments. We all have a part to play in His story.



The Faith of the Church

The Church believes that Jesus is the light of all humanity, *lumen gentium*, as the opening words of the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Church* indicates. The Church understands its sacred mission and purpose in sharing that light with all people, so that all humanity may be one in God (Cf. the Second Vatican Council *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 1).



Questions of the Week

We are not alone on our spiritual journey. We, all nations move toward God. We seek Jesus not only with the wise men of the East but of the North and the South and the West as well.

Adults

How does my life reflect a true and patient search for the Lord? What sacrifices am I ready to make to pursue this search?

Children

Where can I look for Jesus and find him?

Visit us at www.FaithFirst.com (click on “Gospel Reflections”) and share today’s Gospel reading as a family.

Responding to God's Word . . .

In today's second reading, Saint Paul speaks of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to him for the sake of the people he serves. In other words, Paul is very conscious that an extraordinary responsibility has been entrusted to him. He is aware that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and that Jesus is a Savior destined for all people. At the same time, Paul is aware of his own responsibility to bring this message and, indeed, the very person of Jesus to those entrusted to his care.

We can easily translate Paul's sense of responsibility to our own lives. We

are aware of Jesus, of the healing grace he brings to all humanity, and of the hope he offers everyone.

This awareness is not given to us to safeguard as a private possession. Like Paul, we need to recognize that we are instruments of the manifestation of Jesus to the world.

We do not need to think in dramatic terms. All we need to do is examine the circumstances of our lives, the places of daily living and work, and the faces of those we encounter on a regular basis. In these places and with these people, we can share—in what we say and do—Jesus who is light.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. For a week, when family members pray together, at meals or at bedtime, pray for people in different parts of the world.

In the workplace or in school. Identify and address one "dark" area of life at work or in school that could use the light of Christ.

In the community. Make yourself available through your parish evangelization committee to walk with someone who is exploring faith in Christ.



Meditation Moment

A "puzzle page" in a newspaper showed a drawing of an outdoor scene. Beneath it was this question: "Can you find the girl in the drawing?" A close examination of the drawing showed the girl's eyes and eyebrows concealed in a tree branch. Another branch hid her mouth and nose. A cloud revealed her flowing hair. After you discovered the girl, the drawing was never the same again.

For reflection . . .

It is like that with Jesus. He is in our lives, waiting to be found. Once we find him, our lives will never be the same again. This raises a question: Why might I be finding it hard to find Jesus in my life?

ONE DAY HE WILL COME. ONCE IN THE STILLNESS . . . YOU WILL KNOW . . . NOT FROM A BOOK OR THE WORD OF SOMEONE ELSE, BUT THROUGH HIM.

ROMANO GUARDINI

FROM VISION BY MARK LINK, SJ

Let Me Stay on the Journey

Lord, help me
to stay on the journey
in search of you. Help me
when I am tired. Help me when
I've lost my way. Help me when the
destination is not clear. Help me
when discouraging voices crowd
out my hope. Lord, help me to stay
on the journey with the sure
knowledge that you wait for
me and are my
final destination.
Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart as a guide for your faith journey this week.

The Magi found Jesus and returned home to share the one they found with all those whom they met. Go out and share the One who has brought you into the light.

Profile in Faith

The Magi

Tradition has given us the name of the three Magi (although the Bible itself does not say there were three) as Balthasar, Melchior, and Caspar. Again, tradition represents one as Caucasian, one as African, and one as Asian to underscore the universal value of Jesus, light of the nations.

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