

Link to Liturgy



Feast Day

The Epiphany - Adoration of the Magi

Lessons and Discussions

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“a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel”

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Entrance Antiphon

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Ecce advenit

Cf. Mal 3: 1; 1 Chron 29: 12

Alternate options:

Hymns

As with Gladness Men of Old
 Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning
 Hail to the Lord's Anointed
 The First Nowell
 We Three Kings of Orient Are
 What Star Is This?

Praise Songs

Here I am to Worship
 Freedom Reigns

Remnant Band

Light of the World

Collect - Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
 Amen

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,
 one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Matthew 2:1-12 – Daily Roman Missal

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

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – Epiphany

From a sermon by Saint Leo the Great, pope
The Lord has made his salvation known to the whole world

The loving providence of God determined that in the last days he would aid the world, set on its course to destruction. He decreed that all nations should be saved in Christ.

A promise had been made to the holy patriarch Abraham in regard to these nations. He was to have a countless progeny, born not from his body but from the seed of faith. His descendants are therefore compared with the array of the stars. The father of all nations was to hope not in an earthly progeny but in a progeny from above.

Let the full number of the nations now take their place in the family of the patriarchs. Let the children of the promise now receive the blessing in the seed of Abraham, the blessing renounced by the children of his flesh. In the persons of the Magi let all people adore the Creator of the universe; let God be known, not in Judea only, but in the whole world, so that *his name may be great in all Israel*.

Dear friends, now that we have received instruction in this revelation of God's grace, let us celebrate with spiritual joy the day of our first harvesting, of the first calling of the Gentiles. Let us give thanks to the merciful God, *who has made us worthy*, in the words of the Apostle, *to share the position of the saints in light, who has rescued us from the power of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son*. As Isaiah prophesied: *the people of the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and for those who dwelt in the region of the shadow of death a light has dawned*. He spoke of them to the Lord: *The Gentiles, who do not know you, will invoke you, and the peoples, who knew you not, will take refuge in you*.

This is *the day that Abraham saw, and rejoiced to see*, when he knew that the sons born of his faith would be blessed in his seed, that is, in Christ. Believing that he would be the father of the nations, he looked into the future, *giving glory to God, in full awareness that God is able to do what he has promised*.

This is the day that David prophesied in the psalms, when he said: *All the nations that you have brought into being will come and fall down in adoration in your presence, Lord, and glorify your name*. Again, *the Lord has made known his salvation; in the sight of the nations, he has revealed his justice*.

This came to be fulfilled, as we know, from the time when the star beckoned the three wise men out of their distant country and led them to recognize and adore the King of heaven and earth. The obedience of the star calls us to imitate its humble service: to be servants, as best we can, of the grace that invites

[33] Matthew 2:11

[34] The Church's Year pg. 67

[35] St. Peter Chrysologus

[36] Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic Journey to Cologne on the occasion of the XX World Youth Day

[37] In Conversation with God pg. 329

[38] In Conversation with God pg. 329

[39] Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic Journey to Cologne on the occasion of the XX World Youth Day

[40] Saint Peter Chrysologus

[41] 1 Timothy 2:4

[42] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 715

[43] John 4:24

[44] John 14:6

[45] Isaiah 9:1

[46] Luke 1:76-79

[47] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 843

[48] John 8:31-32

[49] Luke 2:29-32

[50] Ephesians 5:8-9

[51] John 1:14

[52] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 122

[53] 1 John 1:1-3 [Evening Prayer II, Christmas]

[54] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 486

[55] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 724

[56] Luke 1:38

striving to stand again. To nature's astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: "Hail." Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made know by the message of an angel may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

"The End" Notes

- [1] Strong's Greek Concordance, 2015. epiphaneia
- [2] The Church's Year pg. 64
- [3] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 528
- [4] Ibid.
- [5] Matthew 3:16-17
- [6] John 2:11
- [7] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B., The Liturgical Year; Christmas – Book II
- [8] Antiphon of Lauds
- [9] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09527a.htm>
- [10] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09527a.htm>
- [11] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09527a.htm>
- [12] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09527a.htm>
- [13] The Church's Year pg. 66
- [14] Matthew 5: 6
- [15] Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic Journey to Cologne on the occasion of the XX World Youth Day
- [16] Numbers 24, 17
- [17] New American Bible footnotes pg. 1063
- [18] Matthew 2:2
- [19] Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic Journey to Cologne on the occasion of the XX World Youth Day
- [20] The Church's Year pg. 68
- [21] The Church's Year pg. 67
- [22] Saint Odilo of Cluny
- [23] In Conversation with God pg. 329-330
- [24] St. Jose Escriva, op cit, 35
- [25] *ibid*, 36
- [26] John 19:39
- [27] *ibid*
- [28] Collect
- [29] Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic Journey to Cologne on the occasion of the XX World Youth Day
- [30] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B., The Liturgical Year; Christmas – Book II
- [31] *Ibid*
- [32] In Conversation with God pg. 327

all men to find Christ.

Dear friends, you must have the same zeal to be of help to one another; then, in the kingdom of God, to which faith and good works are the way, you will shine as children of the light: through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Responsory

This is the glorious day on which Christ himself, the savior of the world, appeared;
the prophets foretold him, the angels worshiped him;
– the Magi saw his star and rejoiced to lay their treasures at his feet.

God's holy day has dawned for us at last;
come, all you peoples, and adore the Lord.
– The Magi saw his star and rejoiced to lay their treasures at his feet

The Epiphany – Lesson and Discussion

"Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem..."

What is the Epiphany? The Greek word *epiphaneia* comes from two words: *epi*, "on, fitting" which intensifies *phaino*, "show forth, appear." Thus, an epiphany properly means a *fitting manifestation*. [1] In the Catholic Church, the Feast of the Epiphany is a holy day set apart to "commemorate the coming of the three wise men from the East, guided by a miraculous star which appeared to them, and directed them to Bethlehem, where they found Christ in the stable." [2] This fitting manifestation of the infant King is shown when the wise men found Jesus as they fell down before Him in adoration.

"The *Epiphany* is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (*magi*) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation." [3]

What is the significance of the adoration of Jesus by the

wise men, the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, and the wedding feast at Cana? At all of these events, a fitting manifestation of Jesus Christ takes place. Through these events, it is clear that He is the anointed one, the Son of God. The name, Christ, means anointed one or Messiah. Jesus is properly called Christ because He is anointed by the Holy Spirit. "In the one same Epiphany three manifestations of Jesus' glory: the mystery of the Magi coming from the East, under the guidance of a star, and adoring the Infant of Bethlehem as the divine King; the mystery of the Baptism of Christ, who, whilst standing in the waters of the Jordan, was proclaimed by the Eternal Father as Son of God; and thirdly, the mystery of the divine power of this same Jesus, when he changed the water into wine at the marriage-feast of Cana." [4] These three events summed up in one word, *Epiphany*, occur at the beginning of the liturgical year and are the divine hat trick or triple play, to assure mankind that truly this is the Son of God.

How did God appear in at these events? At the Nativity, God appears in the flesh in the town of Bethlehem. Prior to the year 376AD, many Churches outside of Rome, celebrated the Nativity (Christmas) and the Epiphany on the same date. It is at the Nativity (Christmas) that Jesus Christ "was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man" as we profess in the Creed. It makes sense that these feasts would be celebrated either on the same date as in days past, or as it is now, where the Epiphany is celebrated within the Christmas season. The next fitting manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God occurs at His Baptism, "after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." [5] The Triune God manifests itself in the voice of the Father, the person of the Son, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. This is a fitting time and place because Baptism is the great Sacrament through which we become children of God. At the Wedding Feast at Cana, Jesus' glory is fittingly manifested by this first miracle as we hear, "this beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, He manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." [6] This time and place is fitting because Jesus came to renew our lives and pour into us the wine that He Himself offers, recalling the Sacrament of Communion.

What are some other similarities between the feast of the Nativity and the Epiphany? The Feasts of the Nativity and the

Then, bless the house with the sign of the cross. You can also sprinkle some holy water in your house if you have some.

After the blessing, the initials of the Magi (traditional names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) are written with chalk over the main doorway of the house, like this: 20 + C + M + B + 13 (the + is a cross; the "13" stands for 2013).

Marian Antiphon – Alma Redemptoris Mater

v

A L-ma * Redemptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérv-i a cæ-li
 porta manes, Et stella ma-ris, succúrre cadénti súrge-
 re qui cu-rat pópu-lo: Tu quæ genu-ísti, na-tú-ra mi-
 ránte, tu-um sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem: Virgo pri-us ac po-
 sté-ri-us, Gabri-é-lis ab o-re sumens illud Ave, pecca-
 tó-rum mi-se-ré-re.

Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but

How are Mary and Moses different in their response? Mary, unlike Moses, is obedient right away to the mission she is given. However, for Moses it took a great deal of grace to enliven the faith and spur him to good works. Our Blessed Mother is already “full of Grace” and thus says yes in faith, and unites herself with the will of the Father.

How are Mary and Moses similar in their response? Both are given the grace necessary to accomplish the task that has been given them by God. Moses says to God, “If you please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor recently, nor now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue.” God the gives Him the grace and confidence saying, “Go then! It is I who will assist you in speaking and will teach you what you are to say.” In the case of Mary, she is called “full of Grace” and told that “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and that power of the Most High will overshadow you”.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Blessing of a Home at Epiphany

We can continue to honor the season by blessing our homes for the New Year. This tradition recalls the visit of the Magi when they entered in the dwelling of the Child Jesus. For us, it marks our homes as a special “holy” place.

Leader: Peace, be to this house.

All: And to all who live here.

Leader: Bless, O Lord, this household and family, and allow all of us who live in this home to find in it a shelter of peace and health. Inspire each of us to develop our individual talents and to contribute wisdom and good works for the benefit of the whole family. Make our house a haven for us all, and a place of warmth and caring for all our friends who come to visit us. Enlighten us with the brilliance of your Epiphany star, so that, as we go into the world, we might clearly see our way to you and discover you in our work and play. This we ask to your glory and in the power of your kingship.

All: For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory now and forever, Amen.

Epiphany show the juxtaposition of Christ as fully human and fully divine. At the Nativity, we see the stark reality of the humanity of Jesus. Mary and Joseph cannot find room for their son to be born. Jesus is cast out among the animals in the cold, dark, and silent night. At the Epiphany, we see the manifestation of His divinity in the homage of the three wise men who travel from the East to adore Him. In addition, the temporal ruler of the time, Herod, is concerned and threatened by the importance of this new born king. “At Christmas it was a few Shepherds that were invited by the Angels to go and recognize the Word made Flesh; but now, at the Epiphany, the voice of God himself calls the whole world to adore this Jesus, and hear him.”[7]

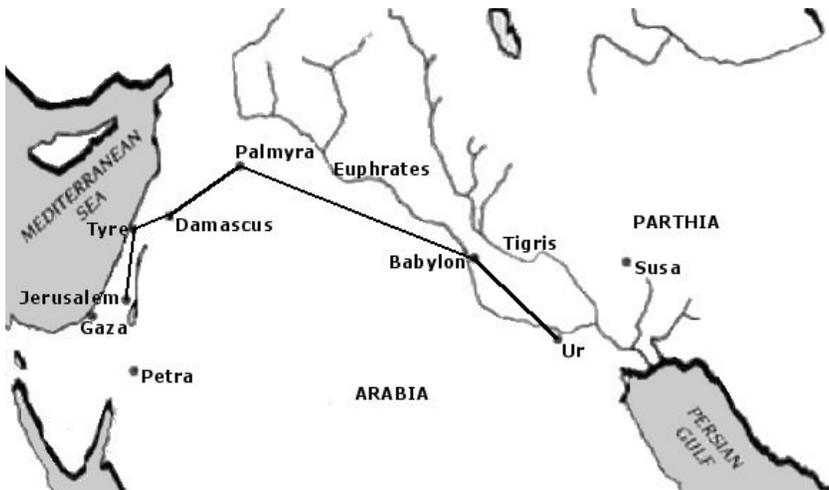
What does the Epiphany tells us about God’s love for man?

The Epiphany shows the rejection of Jesus by Israel and the acceptance of Jesus by the Gentiles. While the Jewish people were asleep, scared, ignorant, and unprepared; the Magi, representing the Gentiles were eager, ready, and willing to embrace the Christ. They were able to see that God was living among them! The Epiphany expresses the deep love of God to unite with His people. Jesus Christ the bridegroom marries the Church, His bride. The Epiphany is the day in which we celebrate this love between Jesus Christ and His Church. “This day is the Church united to the heavenly Spouse, for Christ, in the Jordan, washes away her sins; the Magi run to the royal Nuptials with their gifts: and the guests of the Feast are gladdened by the water changed into wine.”[8] Pope Innocent III said that this great feast is one of consummation, confirmation, and declaration. It is consummated in the adoration of the Magi, confirmed in the Baptism in the Jordan, and declared in the miracle of the water changed into wine. Consummation is the act of bringing something to a conclusion. The Magi journey has come to a conclusion, they are satisfied with the King they have found and show their satisfaction through adoration. We are confirmed, made strong, connecting to the Life of Christ, through Baptism. Baptism is made possible because Our Lord has first purified the waters of Baptism through His own Baptism. Baptismal grace is made complete in the Sacrament of Confirmation. This consummation and confirmation is not limited to Christ and us, it is to be made known to all through our words and actions. A lover declares His love before all. Jesus declares His love for us at a feast in the midst of many. His miracle is cause for great joy as the declaration of His love is manifested before all.

Who were these Three Wise Men? First, we do not know the exact number of men who came. We assume it was three because Jesus received three gifts. However, some early Church Fathers believed it could have been more. The point is that there were men who came a great distance to see a new king. The most common belief held, is that there were three Magi, and their names were Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.[9]

The Magi were not kings in the modern sense of the word, they might have been minor kings or born of a royal line. The early Church Fathers held the assumption that the Magi were kings. [10] They were indeed wealthy to be able to afford such a long travel, and to be able to give Jesus fine gifts. Most believe they might have been of the priestly caste. Their religion was probably of Zoroaster, which dealt with the study of the stars and interpretation of dreams.[11] They sought Truth and their quest for Truth led them to an understanding of God and the acceptance of the Divinity of the Christ child.

Where did they come from? We are not sure exactly where they originated. The term “East” in the scripture means East of Palestine. Given their background it is thought they had come from the Parthian Empire somewhere in Media, Persia, Assyria, and/or Babylonia.[12] They probably crossed the Syrian Desert, lying between the Euphrates and Syria. Here is a picture of a possible route they may have taken. Their exact route we do not know.



Lord.

What is our role in the manifestation of Christ? We are all obligated to manifest what has been manifested to us. We profess that Jesus Christ is King and Lord to all. We wait with great hope to His final coming.

MUSIC – I Will Wait by Mumford and Sons – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:02

<http://youtu.be/Pe8Sncj52UQ>

In the song, the artists sing of the new sun shaking off the cold heavy darkness. This new sun has given them the power to help them tame their flesh. Jesus has broken the shackles of death and sin from us. He helps us conquer the evil one, and we wait in joyful hope of the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, God manifested Himself to Moses in the burning bush. After God manifested Himself to Moses, He called Moses. Just as works follow from faith, Moses first believed, because He saw and then He was given a mission. God said to Moses, “Come, now! I will send you to Pharaoh to lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” When we read Exodus 3 and 4, we see that it took much grace in order to give Moses a lively faith.

ACTIVITY – Read Exodus Chapter 3 and 4

Moses does not readily accept the mission God gives him, in fact Moses even in spite of many signs tries to get out of the mission. In the end, however, we know that Moses does accept the mission God gives and God saves His people, through His servant Moses. **How many excuses does Moses give to try to get out of the mission? What is God’s response to each excuse? What are the excuses we have given God? What is God’s response to us?**

Mary is called the burning bush. “In Mary, the Holy Spirit manifests the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.”[55] In Mary we see both the manifestation and the mission. The Word becomes flesh within the womb of Mary and Mary says regarding the incarnate Word, “be it done to me according to your word.”[56]

VIDEO - The Allegory of the Cave - Plato - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:24

<http://youtu.be/LTWwY8Ok5I0>

Through Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Apostles, we have seen the light with our own eyes. Once we have seen and heard like the man in this video, we desire to proclaim the light to others so that they may also share in the life with us. This fellowship we not only crave for ourselves but for others as well.

TV AD - Phaeton commercial- what hands can do - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 1:27

<http://youtu.be/rOdA48V2IYY>

If we have only seen shadows or images of a thing or whole life, we appreciate the detail and beauty of the real thing when we see it. In the same way, once we have seen the reality of a thing, we can better recognize the shadow or image of the reality. For example when we see the shadow or image of a dog, we immediately think not of the shadow or image of a dog but rather of the real thing it represents. In scripture when we look at the Old Testament types, we immediately begin to see what they foreshadow in the New Testament. What makes this commercial interesting, creative, and even entertaining is that we know what the hand puppets are shadows of. The images that the hands create, we have seen and witnessed. If we had never seen a real animal, this commercial would not mean nearly as much to us.

[See Link to Liturgy [Lesson – Typology](#)]

Jesus' whole life is a manifestation. The Light of Christ does not rise suddenly and blind us; instead His light, truth, and glory are manifested throughout His life. The fact that Jesus is the anointed One, the Son of the living God is slowly manifested. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "the manifestation of this fact takes place only progressively: to the shepherds, to the magi, to John the Baptist, to the disciples. Thus the whole life of Jesus Christ will make manifest 'how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.'"[54] The Liturgical Year is our chance each year to enter into the Life of Christ and see this manifestation first hand. **If we lived during the time of Christ what would be the chance of us being present, in the order of nature, at every event in the Life of Christ?** This was the privilege of only a few people, like or Blessed Mother, Saints Peter, James, and John. Even these privileged few were not at every event. Because of the Liturgical Year, we can be present, in the order of Grace, at every event in the life of Our

What made them come all the way to Bethlehem in search of Jesus? God had inspired their souls to allow them to see the star, which appeared in their land.[13] It is also taught by some that Daniel's time in captivity could have had an impact. Daniel was a young Jew who was taken into captivity 500 years prior to the birth of Jesus. During his time in Babylon, some of his captors could have been exposed to the prophets and thus the prophecies regarding the birth of the King of Kings.

"It was in order to seek this King that they had set off on their journey. Deep within themselves they felt prompted to go in search of the true justice that can only come from God, and they wanted to serve this King, to fall prostrate at his feet and so play their part in the renewal of the world. They were among those 'who hunger and thirst for justice'[14]. This hunger and thirst had spurred them on in their pilgrimage - they had become pilgrims in search of the justice that they expected from God, intending to devote themselves to its service."[15]

How did they follow the star?**Video - Christmas Star - Sixty Symbols –POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 7:21** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRzF8LxUtXI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRzF8LxUtXI>

This video shows the connection between Jupiter and Saturn, Jupiter (King) and Saturn (Time) in the consolation of Pices, which represents the land of Israel.

It was a common belief in ancient times that a new star appearing represented the time of a ruler's birth. Matthew also draws parallels from the Old Testament story of Balaam, who had prophesied, "A star shall advance from Jacob." [16] However, it is good to point out the star in that verse meant not an astral phenomenon but the king himself.[17]

What did they expect to find? They were looking for a king, but not just any king. They were searching for the King of the Jews[18] "They were sure that God existed and that he was a just and gentle God. And perhaps they also knew of the great prophecies of Israel foretelling a King who would be intimately united with God, a King who would restore order to the world, acting for God and in his Name." [19]

Why did Herod fear this new king? Herod was scared that, if there were a new king, then he would have to relinquish his

power. He was a cruel and jealous king, so when he had heard of a newborn king, he worried that it meant his replacement and possibly punishment for his crimes. The city of Jerusalem feared, as well, because many were linked to Herod and led lives of the same vices.

Why did the Magi leave a different way? Just as an angel spoke to St. Joseph in a dream and told him to flee Palestine, so too were the Magi told in a dream to return by another rout to avoid Herod. Once they had seen God made flesh they knew they must be obedient to the dream. **How can we be more obedient to God?** For us, once we witness Christ in the Church we should avoid our old ways, the ways that lead us to sin. St. Gregory the Great said, “Our fatherland is paradise, heaven. We have departed from it by pride, disobedience, abuse of the senses; therefore it is needed that we return to it by obedience, contempt of the world, and by taming the desires of the flesh.”[20]

Let us be like the Magi, willing to cross any distance that separates us from our Lord, and when we do reach him we fall to our knees in adoration for Him.

The Gifts: Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh – Lesson and Discussion

“Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh”

Why gold, frankincense, and myrrh? It was the ancient Eastern custom, never to appear without presents before a prince or king. It is taught, the Magi, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, presented gifts which honored Christ as God, king, and as man.[21] “To offer gold is to proclaim Christ’s kingship, to offer incense is to adore his Godhead, and to offer myrrh is to acknowledge his mortality.”[22]

What are the meaning of the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh? The gifts and their meanings are as follows:[23]

Gold

Gold is a precious metal. It is seen as having value both now and at the time of Jesus. The gold, which was presented to Christ, is a symbol of his royalty. As Christians today, we should want Jesus as our King and ruler. We should offer him “the precious gold we receive when in spirit we are detached from money and material goods. Let us not forget that these things are good,

Glory for the Jews; Light for the Gentiles – Lesson and Discussion

“a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel”

Jesus Christ, as stated in the Cantic of Simeon, is glory to Israel and light to the Gentiles. This cantic, prayed nightly in the Liturgy of the Hours, is not just the prayer of Simeon but the prayer of every Christian. “Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.”[49] The Magi are the first of the Gentiles to be drawn by the Light and adore the Light.

The Magi, having come to the Light in adoration, are now welcome to become children born of the light. Saint Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, will tell the Church in Ephesus to “Live as children born of the light. Light produces every kind of goodness and justice and truth.”[50] Jesus, the Light of the World, is the source of every kind of goodness, justice, and truth. Without Christ we see only a shadow or a mere image of reality.

The Light comes not only for the Gentile, but also for the promised people of Israel. When the Israelites encounter Jesus, they witness the hidden God of the Old Testament in all His glory. For Jesus is “the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”[51]

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that the “mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way” in the Old Testament. [52] This hiddenness comes to life and does not remain in the shadows, when we read and understand the New Testament. Saint John says, “This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched – we speak of the word of life. (This life became visible; we have seen and bear witness to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was present to the Father and became visible to us.) What we have seen and heard we proclaim in turn to you so that you may share life with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”[53]

"Brethren, the raja was delighted with the scene.

"Just so are these preachers and scholars holding various views blind and unseeing.... In their ignorance they are by nature quarrelsome, wrangling, and disputatious, each maintaining reality is thus and thus."

Then the Exalted One rendered this meaning by uttering this verse of uplift

O how they cling and wrangle, some who claim
For preacher and monk the honored name!
For, quarreling, each to his view they cling.
Such folk see only one side of a thing.

How does this parable relate to other religions? In the Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant, each blind man grasps onto a part of the elephant, they believe their part to be the full truth of what an Elephant is and thus they bicker, disagree, and fight. In reality the blind men can only know the truth (the elephant) if they see the sum of all its parts – the fullness. In other religions they may have a piece of God, but only in by the truth of Jesus Christ, and His Church is the fullness of the truth to be found.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson Lesson - Fullness of Truth - Part II]

To worship in truth is to worship the whole Christ. We don't worship a part of Christ, an anti-Christ, or ourselves; we worship Jesus Christ of the Gospels, who claimed that He was the way, the truth, and the life. He claimed that He was God. All His claims proved to be true, when He rose from the dead.

How does truth and freedom relate? "Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, 'If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"[48] Relativism and mistaking partial truth for the whole truth leads to enslavement. Jesus Christ, the Truth, has set us free. The freedom Christ gives has never and cannot be given by temporal kings, governments, and power. Let us recognize in Christ what the Magi recognized. Jesus is the Sovereign Lord, sung about in today's Introit and prophesized in First Chronicles and Malachi. Kingship, government, and power are in His holy hands.

for they come from God, but the Lord has laid down that we should use them, without allowing our hearts to become attached to them, by putting them to good use for the benefit of all mankind."[24]

MOVIE "Baby Jesus Prayer" - POP CULTURE CONNECTION

2:54

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YteOAhc3PGU>

During this clip we see Ricky Bobby, who has accrued millions upon millions of dollars for racecar driving. We can laugh and admire Ricky for praying to Jesus in the infant form like the Magi did by adoring the child Jesus at the Epiphany. Most of us, we have an "image" of Jesus that means a lot to us, especially as we direct our prayers to Jesus. **Why do many people like to picture Jesus as an infant King, a humble baby?** It is in the humility and smallness of God that we feel that we can approach Him and this smallness is something we need to imitate, for He shared in our humanity so we can share in His divinity. In the clip Ricky Bobby prays of how he "loves that money". This is a complete contradiction of why he is praying. He prays that he loves Jesus, but he loves his money too. He even sold rights to his prayers for endorsements! He is having a hard time detaching himself from his wealth.

Frankincense

Frankincense is incense, a perfume like substance that was burned each evening on the altar as a symbol of the hope placed in the Messiah. We use incense to show adoration to the Most Blessed Sacrament, veneration to the altar, the Gospel, icons, and respect and honor for the presiders, ministers, and congregation. "The pleasant smell of incense comes from some small, hidden grains of aromatic material placed upon the burning charcoal. Likewise is the sweet fragrance of Christ is noticed among men - not in a sudden burst of flame, but in the constant re-hot embers of virtues such as justice, loyalty, faithfulness, understanding and cheerfulness."[25]

Myrrh

Myrrh is similar to Frankincense in that it grows from small trees or shrubs and can be burnt. It is for Jesus a sign of His mortality and death. After Christ had died on the cross and was buried, they covered him with Myrrh oil.[26] Myrrh is the spirit of sacrifice that can never be lacking in a Christian life.

How can we sacrifice? What else can we offer to God? We should offer our whole selves to God every single day. We can make our offering through daily Mass or at the very least reading the daily readings. We can sacrifice by “small conquests”, such as “smiling at those who annoy us, denying the body some superfluous fancy, listening to others, making full use of the time God allots us, and so many more.”[27] By truly and genuinely giving ourselves little by little everyday, our lives acquire a far greater value than gold, frankincense or myrrh, because they are united to the sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God who offers Himself there.[28]

Adoring Jesus then and adoring Him now – Lesson and Discussion

“...they found the Child there, with His Mother, Mary, and fell down to worship Him.”

The Magi were able to follow the stars to help them track the long journey to Bethlehem. When they had finally reached the child Jesus, their physical journey had ended. However, “at this point a new journey began for them, an inner pilgrimage which changed their whole lives. They were expecting to find a great soon to be king, not a baby in a manger. This must have been very different for the Magi. They had stopped at Jerusalem specifically in order to ask the King who lived there for news of the promised King who had been born. They knew that the world was in disorder, and for that reason their hearts were troubled.”[29]

How are the Magi pilgrims? How are we pilgrims? “The Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentile-world, have been admitted into the court of the great King whom they have been seeking, and we have followed them. The Child has smiled upon us, as he did upon them. All the fatigues of the long journey - which man must take to reach his God - all are over and forgotten; our Emmanuel is *with us*, and we are with him. Bethlehem has received us, and we will not leave her again - for, in Bethlehem, we have *the Child, and Mary his Mother*. Where else could we find riches like these that Bethlehem gives us? Oh! let us beseech this incomparable *Mother* to give us this *Child* of hers, (for he is our light, and our love, and our Bread of life,) now that we are about to approach the Altar, led by the Star of our faith. Let us, at once, open our treasures; let us prepare our gold, our frankincense, and our myrrh, for the sweet Babe, our King. He will be pleased with our gifts, and we know he never suffers himself to

tion for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men, that they may at length have life.”[47]

The Church sees the “goodness and truth” found in these religions as a partial truth, which should then lead to the fullness of truth. Many times the partial truths, whether they are taught by religions or held by the individual, are considered to be the full truth in their eyes. Other religions are man’s search for God. Catholicism is, alone, God’s search for man.

STORY - The Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant

A number of disciples went to the Buddha and said, "Sir, there are living here in Savatthi many wandering hermits and scholars who indulge in constant dispute, some saying that the world is infinite and eternal and others, that it is finite and not eternal, some saying that the soul dies with the body and others that it lives on forever, and so forth. What, Sir, would you say concerning them?"

The Buddha answered, "Once upon a time there was a certain raja who called to his servant and said, 'Come, good fellow, go and gather together in one place all the men of Savatthi who were born blind... and show them an elephant.' 'Very good, sire,' replied the servant, and he did as he was told. He said to the blind men assembled there, 'Here is an elephant,' and to one man he presented the head of the elephant, to another its ears, to another a tusk, to another the trunk, the foot, back, tail, and tuft of the tail, saying to each one that that was the elephant.

"When the blind men had felt the elephant, the raja went to each of them and said to each, 'Well, blind man, have you seen the elephant? Tell me, what sort of thing is an elephant?'

"Thereupon the men who were presented with the head answered, 'Sire, an elephant is like a pot.' And the men who had observed the ear replied, 'An elephant is like a winnowing basket.' Those who had been presented with a tusk said it was a ploughshare. Those who knew only the trunk said it was a plough; others said the body was a grainery; the foot, a pillar; the back, a mortar; the tail, a pestle, the tuft of the tail, a brush.

"Then they began to quarrel, shouting, 'Yes it is!' 'No, it is not!' 'An elephant is not that!' 'Yes, it's like that!' and so on, till they came to blows over the matter.

How are we able to worship in Truth? We can worship in truth because, “the people of the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and for those who dwelt in the region of the shadow of death a light has dawn.”[45] In the Canticle of Zechariah, which is prayed each morning by the Church in the Liturgy of the Hours, Zechariah makes reference to his son St. John the Baptist and Jesus when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. “And you my child [St. John the Baptist] will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death’s shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”[46] Jesus is the sun, that at the break of dawn, dispels are shadows and darkness, falsehood and half-truths, thus enabling all people to see the truth and therefore worship in Truth.

If Jesus Christ, the sun has already risen, how can people still sit in darkness? Modern society is accustomed to believing that truth is relative. This means that whatever a person believes to be true is truth. According to this false precept, there cannot be “worship in Truth” in an objective, absolute manner, but rather there can only be a “worship of truths” that are subjective. Since “truth” comes from what each individual believes, therefore the worship in reality is, worship of self. If everyone has their own “truth” then each person is enlightened and feels as if they are not “sitting in darkness” or “shadow of death” but rather are basking in the light. In fact with this line of thought, there is no “darkness” or “shadow of death.” Truth is, however absolute and objective. Therefore, there is an absolute and objective light, Jesus, and there is also the absence of that light which is “darkness” or “shadow of death”.

Are all religions equal and true? No. There is a falsehood that all religions are equal and true. The Catholic Church does not recognize other religions as equal. All religions are not equal. The Church recognizes that other religions can search for God. This search can be noble, good, and true and if brought to its completion, those searching, who sat in darkness will see a great light, the light of Christ. “The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown, yet near, since he gives life and breath in all things and wants all men to be saved. Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as ‘a prepara-

be outdone in generosity. When we have to return to our duties, we will, like the Magi, leave our hearts with our Jesus; and it shall be by *another way*, by a new manner of life, that we will finish our sojourn in this country of our exile, looking forward to that happy day, when life and light eternal will come and absorb into themselves the shadows of vanity and time, which now hang over us.”[30]

What do we do when our pilgrimage is over and we have found God? If we have now found Him, we now have another journey to make. We are pilgrims twice. Our first pilgrimage is finding the Infant King of Bethlehem, His first coming. Our second pilgrimage is to find ourselves face to face with Jesus Christ, the King of Heaven and Earth, His second coming. There are two comings; there are two pilgrimages, one to find God, the other to stay faithful to Him so that He might be found in our hearts. **How is our second journey, that to heaven, one of fatigue? How is this second journey long? How does the first and second journey differ?**

What did the Magi think they were going to see when they got there? The Magi were expecting to see a great king. What they found was the King of all Kings in a poor shelter with just his mother and foster father. “They had to change their ideas about power, about God and about man, and in so doing; they also had to change themselves. Now they were able to see that God’s power is not like that of the powerful of this world. God’s ways are not as we imagine them or as we might wish them to be.”[31]

What do we think we are going to see when we find God? What false expectations do we bring on our journey to Him? Many times we approach God with the expectation of great things to follow once we find Him. Maybe we expect all of our prayers to be answered in the way we want them to be. Maybe we expect to find a great king who will bestow every blessing and good thing on us. Like the wise men, we must change our ideas about power and humble ourselves before God. We must purify our expectations by removing all that we will and being open instead to all that is God’s Will.

How did they react when they found the child? They rejoiced! “They rejoiced with an uncontainable joy.”[32] They began to prostrate themselves and adore Him.[33]

SPORTS “Silent Night Basketball Game” – POP CULTURE CONNECTION 4:13

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csjydRx750k>

The home crowd every year stays perfectly silent until the home team reaches their 10th point. Once they do, they go wild! The world was silent when our Savior arrived here on earth. However, the Magi realizing the hour was at hand went wild in jubilation at finding the Messiah. At the end of the “Silent Night” game the student body, coaches, and players express what is of true importance by singing “Silent Night”. May we be as jubilant at seeing our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament as the fans were at reaching the 10th point!

Why did the Magi begin adoring Him?

The Magi realized, by the light of faith, that the infant they saw at Bethlehem was God Himself. Even being surrounded by poverty, the Magi recognized the baby as the expected Messiah, the newborn king of the Jews. They prostrated in homage of their country.[34] In a deeper way, they see “heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body”[35]

What does this have to do with us? Pope Benedict XVI at World Youth Day XX made the connection between the hidden God of the nativity, which the Magi adored, and the hidden God in the Blessed Sacrament that we adore. “Dear friends, this is not a distant story that took place long ago. It is with us now. Here in the Sacred Host, He is present before us and in our midst. As at that time, so now He is mysteriously veiled in a sacred silence; as at that time, it is here that the true face of God is revealed. For us, He became a grain of wheat that falls on the ground and dies and bears fruit until the end of the world”[36]

At every Mass and every time we gaze upon the Eucharist, we, just like the Magi, can grow in more understanding that Jesus Christ is truly Lord! Christ is our light that must shine within us so that we may light the way for others and ourselves. When we find Christ, our light burns and we are filled with joy. Christ is the Light of the World, and He is still present on this earth in the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus present in the tabernacle is the same Jesus the Magi found in Bethlehem.[37] **How do we adore him when He is exposed in the monstrance or in the tabernacle? How do we come to Jesus every Sunday at Mass? Do we kneel or genuflect in the proper moments in the Mass, or**

each time we pass by those places where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved?[38]

Thus, in the words of our holy father, “He is present now as he was then in Bethlehem. He invites us to that inner pilgrimage which is called adoration. Let us set off on this pilgrimage of the spirit and let us ask him to be our guide. Amen.”[39]

Worship in Truth – Lesson and Discussion

“They prostrated themselves and did him homage”

“Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for king, myrrh for one who is to die. So the Gentiles, who were the last, become the first: the faith of the Magi is the first fruits of the belief of the Gentiles.”[40]

God “wills everyone to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth.”[41] God’s will is accomplished in the person of Jesus Christ the Word made Flesh. For it is in the person of Jesus Christ that “He will gather and reconcile the scattered and divided peoples; he will transform the first creation”[42] The scattered and divided spoken of are both Jew and Gentile, those from the one chosen nation, and the people from all nations. The wise men are the first of the Gentiles that God gathers to “worship in spirit and truth”[43]

What is the Truth that we worship? The Truth that we worship is Jesus Christ alone, who tells us “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”[44] We cannot worship an idea, a thought, or ourselves. We can only worship God who was manifested in Jesus Christ as the second person of the Trinity.

MOVIE – Passion of the Christ – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:59

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJfBsSg1kU>

This portion of the movie is when Pontius Pilate meets Jesus for questioning. In his encounter, Pilate questions Jesus if He is a king and what they speak of is truth. Later on, Pilate speaks with his wife asking her to help him hear the truth. His wife explains one must be open to hearing and worshipping Truth.