The Epiphany of the Lord

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.”

Matthew 2:1–2

JANUARY 3, 2016

WEEK AT A GLANCE

**Sunday, 01/03**
- RE 3 yr old prgm, Rm D 9:15 am
- RE Classes, Hall/School 9:15 am
- No CLOW/No Older Sac
- ICF, Parish Hall 2:00 pm
- Youth Group, Parish hall 7-9 pm

**Monday, 01/04**
- RE Older Sac, Parish Hall 4 pm

**Tuesday, 01/05**
- RE Grds 1-3, School 3:40 - 5 pm
- RE Grds 4-5, Parish Hall 3:40 - 5 pm
- RE Grds 7-8, Parish Hall 7 - 8:15 pm
- Knights of Columbus, Min. Ctr 7 pm

**Wednesday 1/06**
- Sewing Ministry, Rms A & B, 9 am
- RE Grds 1-3, School 3:40 - 5 pm
- RE Grds 4-5, Parish Hall 3:40 - 5 pm
- RE Grd 6, Parish Hall 7 - 8:15 pm
- St. Vincent DePaul, Chapel 7 pm

**Thursday, 1/07**
- Centering Prayer, Min. Ctr 9 am
- RE Grds 1-3, School 3:40 - 5 pm
- RE Grds 4-5, Parish Hall 3:40 - 5 pm
- RE Baptismal mtg, Church 6 pm
- RCIA, Min. Ctr 7 pm

**Friday, 1/08**
- Adult Ed Speaker, Parish Hall, 7 pm

**Saturday, 01/09**
- Men’s Fellowship, Min. Ctr 7:30 am
- Altar Society, Rms A & B 8:30 am
- RE Baptisms, 10:00 am, 11:00 am

**Sunday, 01/10**
- RE 3 yr old prgm, Rm D 9:15 am
- RE Classes, Hall/School 9:15 am
- CLOW
- Older Sac, Rm D 11:00 am
- Confirmation 6 pm - 9 pm
- Free throw competition, Gym 7:30 am
- Pancake Breakfast, Gym 7:30 am
- Centering Prayer , Min. Ctr 2:30 pm

To Hear the Gospel and Make a Difference
Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Happy Epiphany! It seems like the church year just started, yet today we begin the final week of the Christmas season. The Christmas trees and stockings, the crèches and other decorations set up just a few short weeks ago, will soon be put away for another year.

The Epiphany story is a fascinating part of Christmas. Mark, Luke and John don’t mention the magi, and Matthew provides only scant details about them. According to our traditional understanding, the magi were from the East, perhaps Persia, and followed the star of the “newborn king of the Jews” from its rising until it led them to the Christ child in Bethlehem. While they saw a newborn baby amid the sounds and smells of a stable, they had an epiphany, defined as “a sudden, intuitive perception or insight into a reality,” that was beyond what was in front of them. They gave gifts and paid homage to Jesus; then they returned to their country. The magi are often portrayed as somewhat unsure of what they had seen, and they are also sometimes referred to as the first Gentile witnesses of Christ.

I’ve always wanted to know more about the magi, so during Advent, quite by chance, I found and read Revelation of the Magi: The Lost Tale of the Wise Men’s Journey to Bethlehem. This fascinating book, by Dr. Brent Landau, exposes a new understanding of the magi using a supposed first person account of their journey called Revelation of the Magi. This apocryphal 4th century AD text had never been translated into English from its original Syriac language, until Dr. Landau discovered it, “hiding in plain sight,” in a Vatican archive. Like all literature of this type, its authorship and authenticity are questionable. But the story is referenced in writings as influential as St. Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologica, and many of the story’s details are represented in ecclesial artwork through the 15th century. So perhaps there is something to glean from it.

One of the more fascinating claims of the “revelation” is that the light of the Star of Bethlehem, a light brighter than the sun, shone over the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden before the fall of Adam. The reappearance of the light was prophesied to ancestors of the magi including Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve, and was confirmation of the coming virgin birth of the Son of God. In other words, the light in the garden was the light of the Son of God before His Incarnation. So the light that led the magi was, according to the story, Jesus leading the magi to Himself!

As I said, it’s an intriguing read. If you’re interested in the magi, why not splurge on one last present before the Christmas season ends. Go on line and order a copy of this remarkable book. How much is truth and how much is myth is a question. However the insights contained in the text allow us an exciting and fresh view, perhaps “an epiphany,” about this ancient story that we can apply to our lives. The magi kept the faith until the light returned and led them to Christ. Are we making the light of Christ visible to all those we meet?

May the Blessings of the Christ Child bring you peace, joy and new epiphanies now and beyond the Christmas Season!

Deacon John

Reflections on Sunday Readings:

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

The last part of the book of Isaiah contains the words of a prophet who lived after the Jews returned from exile. They found their temple destroyed and the city leveled. But the prophet, with the eyes of faith, sees a wonderful future for Jerusalem.

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

The Ephesians were a community in which Jewish and Gentile converts lived side by side. The author of this letter confirms that God’s saving grace is available to everyone, whatever their background.

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Did your New Year’s Resolution involve deepening your faith? Join us for Thirsty Thursday, January 7th at the youth house. Thirsty Thursday is open to 20 and 30 year olds in the parish looking to connect with other catholic young adults. We meet at 7 pm for prayer, followed by a social hour. This month the group will also be volunteering for Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, Jan. 16th. For more information, contact katedoherty.ctk@gmail.com.

Our 11th annual women’s retreat will be January 8th - 10th at San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville. The theme is “Pray it Forward During the Year of Mercy”. It will be directed by Sr. Carol Quilivan, CSJ. Registration can be completed at the Parish House. The last day to register is January 4, 2016.

Centering Prayer Workshop, Sundays: Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31 from 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm. Join us for our introductory workshop which familiarizes participants with the method of Centering Prayer. The workshop consists of four presentations led by Eileen Halliburton: 1. Prayer as Relationship; 2. The Method of Centering Prayer; 3. Thoughts and the Use of the Sacred Word; 4. Deepening our Relationship with God. Register at: 2saile621@gmail.com or call Sharon at 925-943-3190. Suggested donation $50.00. All workshops in the ministry center.

All girls and boys ages 9 to 14 are invited to participate in the Council level competition for the 2015-16 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship. The local competition will be held on Sunday, January 10th from 7:30 am to 11:30 am at the CTK gym. Bring your ball to warm-up. There is no fee required. Contestants will be treated to a pancake breakfast, while supplies last. Questions? Contact Roberto Bracamontes at 925-899-7782.

Come, Hear, and Discuss: “The Culture of Encounter, Pope Francis and the Synod on the Family,” a talk by Aaron Bianchi. One of Pope Francis’ core messages is the need for a “culture of encounter.” Reflecting on Aaron’s time in Rome at the Synod on the Family and conversations with Bishops, we will spend time discussing how Pope Francis’ vision of the Church is being put into reality. **Monday, Jan. 11 at 7:00 pm** in the parish hall.

Make a Difference this Year! Thursday, January 14th at 7 pm in the parish hall. CTK’s Faith in Action ministry invites you to learn about our ministry. This new-comers meeting will give you the chance to connect with us and learn how you can get involved in the amazing work being done in our community to promote justice and give to those in need.

Many Catholic men have asked themselves: Should I consider the priesthood? Discernment retreat weekend is happening on Jan. 15-17, 2016. Must be a single male, 21 years or older and sponsored by a priest. For more information email discernment.retreat@stpsu.org or 650-325-5621.

Save the Date! CYO Crab Feed will be held **Saturday, January 30th** from 6:30 pm - 11:30 pm. Tickets are $55 each and will be available soon. New to the menu - tri-tip! Crab feed is open to all parishioners, not only CYO families. For more information, contact Allen Brezac at allen.brezac@comcast.com.

Our spring grief workshop will be led by Sr. Joanne Gallagher and a team of peer ministers who will facilitate a 7 week workshop to help you begin the healing process of losing a loved one, whether the loss was recent or years ago. **Dates are Monday evenings, Feb. 1 - March 13, 2016. Please call 925-682-2486 to register.**
PRAY FOR THE SICK
IN OUR PARISH:
Winnie Spurs, Laura
Najar Brown, Henry Lejano, Jim Pitlick,
Judith Serdutz,
Dioscoro Rodolfo, Judy Munson.

Father of goodness and love, hear our prayers for the sick members of our community and for all who are in need. Amid mental and physical suffering may they find consolation in your healing presence. Show your mercy as you close wounds, cure illness, make broken bodies whole and free downcast spirits. May these special people find lasting health and deliverance, and so join us in thanking you for all your gifts. We ask this through the Lord Jesus who healed those who believed. Amen.