

The Bells of St. Mary's  
The Church of the Immaculate Conception

The Epiphany of the Lord  
January 5, 2020

From Fr. Anthony Columba Ekanem, MSP—Pastor

"Epiphany" means manifestation. And the "Epiphany of the Lord" is Jesus' manifestation not only to these three Magi from the East, but it's also a symbolic but real manifestation of the Christ to the whole world. These Magi, traveling from a foreign and non-Jewish nation, reveal that Jesus came for all people. The Greek word, Epiphany (επιφάνεια), means appearance apart from manifestation. There are multiple revelations of Jesus as God in the Feast of the Epiphany:

1. First, the angels revealed Jesus to the shepherds.
2. The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi.
3. The feast is the commemoration of the Baptism of Christ, where the Father and the Holy Spirit gave combined testimony to Jesus' identity as Son of God.
4. Later, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus revealed himself as the promised Messiah, and at Cana, Jesus showed his Divinity by transforming water into wine.

These Magi were "wise men" who studied the stars and were aware of the Jewish belief that a Messiah was coming. They were versed in much of the wisdom of the day Jewish belief in the Messiah. God used what they were familiar with to call them to adore Christ. He used a star. They understood the stars, and when they saw this new and unique star over Bethlehem, they realized that something special was happening. So the first lesson we take from this for our own lives is that God will use what is familiar to us to call us to Himself. Look for the "star" that God is using to call you. It's closer than you may think.

A second point to note is that the Magi fell prostrate before the Christ Child. They laid their lives down before Him in complete surrender and adoration. They set a perfect example for us. If these astrologers from a foreign land could come and adore Christ in such a profound way, we must do the same. Perhaps you could try lying down prostrate in prayer this day, in imitation of the Magi, or at least do so in your heart through prayer. Adore Him with a complete surrender of your life.

Lastly, the Magi bring gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These three gifts, presented to our Lord, show that they acknowledged this Child as the Divine King, who would die to save us from sin.

- Gold is for a King,
- Frankincense is a burnt offering to God, and Myrrh is for one who would die. Thus, their adoration is grounded in the truths of who this Child is. If we are to adore Christ properly, we must also honor Him in this threefold way.

Take some moment to ponder upon these Magi and see what you can learn from them.

- Are you called from the foreign place of this world to seek out the Messiah?
- What is God using to invite you to Himself?
- When you discover Him, do not hesitate to acknowledge the full truth of who He is, lying prostrate before Him in complete and humble submission.

Also note, the Epiphany is a big celebration, especially in Spanish speaking countries. Things look different around the household: the infant Jesus in the manger now has a small gold crown and is wearing regal robes. The figures of the wise men have reached Bethlehem, completing the nativity scene. The Church extends itself on Epiphany to the homes of the faithful. The custom of blessing the home on this day probably originated from these words in the Gospel, "And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother, and prostrating they adored Him." The priest blesses the house if he can be present, but if not, the father of the family may do so.

I will be away on Thursday, January 9 for my vacation. Fr George and Fr. Hattar will be available for any pastoral need during that time.

#### **Stewardship**

\*Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday, 12/29/19 our Offering was \$ 3, 402.00

\*Today's our second collection is for Missionary Society of St. Paul

Next week we will have a second collection for Catholic Communications/Catholic University.

*.. Thank you to the Spanish Community for the New Year's Family celebration and the \$2,701.00 funds collected.*

**Food Collection:** Today we will have our monthly food collection for the needy in our community and as always thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

***THERE WILL BE A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING THIS COMING TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020 AT 7:00 PM IN THE PARISH RECTORY.***

#### **Special Announcement**

Public School Teacher's Retreat on Saturday, January 25, 2020 from 9:00 – 1:30 pm

Today Sunday, Jan 4, 2020, there is a second collection to support The Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria where Fr George and Fr Tony belong. We invite you to support us in the work of the missions we are serving. By

- Sponsoring the training of a Seminarian in Nigeria.
- Helping orphans and victims of wars in Malawi, Liberia and South Sudan.
- Providing medicine for the sick, food for the hungry, and water for the thirsty in our mission.
- Opening doors of opportunity for the poor kids in our missions by funding their education and supporting our school apostolate and self – reliant projects.
- Praying regularly for the success of our mission efforts.
- Considering to become an Associate Members of St Paul giving monthly to MSP missions
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#### **Parish Family Directory**

January 5, is our last day for photographs to be taken. You still have time to book for an appointment for your photo with Dianne. Call the Parish Office or meet her after this weekend's Mass.

#### **Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal**

We have reached our Parish Goal of \$39,500. Thank you again my dear sisters and brothers, who have always responded generously to this annual appeal. We are blessed and proud to have people like you in our parish community. Our Parish Community which is made up of Arabic, Spanish, and English speaking parishioners, has never lacked behind in these annual efforts. May you all experience in this new year God's blessings in all you do.

#### **Sundays Readings:**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 60: 1-6, p. 47

Darkness covers the earth, and heavy clouds hang over the people. But the light has come, and the glory of the Lord shines bright.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 72:7-8, 10-11 12-13 p. 49 Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

**Second Reading:** Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6 p. 49 In Christ Jesus, Gentiles and Jews are co-heirs of the family fortune and co-sharers in the saving promise.

**Gospel:** Matthew 2: 1-12 p. 51

The magi from the east followed the star until it stopped still over the house. They entered, found the child with Mary, prostrated themselves, and did him homage.

#### **Religious Education**

##### **January: 2020**

1/11/20 - Religious Education Classes

1/18/20 - Religious Education Classes

1/20/20 - Monday Confirmation Retreat in the Church Hall 9:30—2:00 pm

1/25/20 - Religious Education Classes

**February: 2020**

2/02/20 - Religious Education Classes 2<sup>nd</sup> Confirmation meeting in the school cafeteria at 11:30am

**YOUTH CORNER**

After numerous discussions in Pastoral Council concerning our Youth, it was agreed upon that we organize an appreciation gathering for the few who have been participating in our parish ministries. We had about 40 young people who came, and the Altar Servers were specifically acknowledged with the hope that next year we will extend it to those serving as Ushers, Lectors, and Catechists as we try to begin a Youth Group. Ms. Nancy Valencia will work with Evelyn Rosario, Karla Marmolejos, Guadalupe Campos as a team to help us revive Youth Group in our Parish. They have already agreed upon to be meeting the last Saturday of every month. Fr. George and I are appealing to parents to encourage your children to come and join the group. Any suggestion is welcome but must first pass through the team.

**Mass Intentions for the week of  
January 4, to January 12, 2020****Saturday, January 4, 2020:**

12:05 pm - Portia Fagel + \* Espie Thompson  
5:00 pm - Walter R. Mc. Clain + \* Helen McClain  
7:30pm - Available/Disponibile

**Sunday, January 5, 2020:**

7:30 am - For the Parish  
9:00 am - Hector J. Marmolejos \* Cesar Cuadra Family  
11:00 am - Florinda Valdivia + \* Beba Brown  
Celina Antao + \* Eduardo & Esther Rodrigues

**Monday, January 6, 2020:**

8:15 am - Amparo Chicano + \* Violet Chicano  
12:05 pm - Our Lady of Guadalupe \* Julia Diaz

**Tuesday January 7, 2020:**

8:15 am - Available/Disponibile  
12:05 pm - St. Anthony \* Julia Diaz

**Wednesday, January 8, 2020:**

8:15 am - Rosario Lousianna Galarsa De Jurado + \* Victor Manuel Jurado  
12:05 pm - Joseph Kattukaran + \* Family

**Thursday, January 9, 2020**

8:15am - Available/Disponibile  
12:05 pm - Decease Member of the Rodriguez & Morales Family \* Julia Diaz  
7:00 pm - Available /Disponibile

**Friday, January 10, 2020:**

8:15 am - In Thanksgiving  
12:05 pm - For all the Decease Members of the Rivera Family \* Marta Vega

**Saturday, January 11, 2020:**

12:05 pm - Almando, Vincenzo & Cristina De Luca + \* Grace De Luca Family  
5:00 pm - Rose & Joanne Kunny + \* Helen McClain  
7:30pm - Ana Aleman & Mercedes Matilde Balandra + \* Miguel Balandra

**Sunday, January 12, 2020:**

7:30 am - All Souls' in Purgatory \* Annie  
9:00 am - Gustavo Maturana + \* Orfelina Maturana  
11:00 am - Lisa Hind Abbasi \* Bonanno Family

+Indicates deceased \*Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.

**MASS BOOK**

If you want to book Mass for any particular Intention, this is the time to call the Parish Office.

**HELP KEEP OUR CHURCH CLEAN**

We are still working on the Guidelines for the use and rental of our Parish Hall.

**CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

To catch up with your Sunday contribution, you can do it now before we start preparing the statements for your Tax purposes.