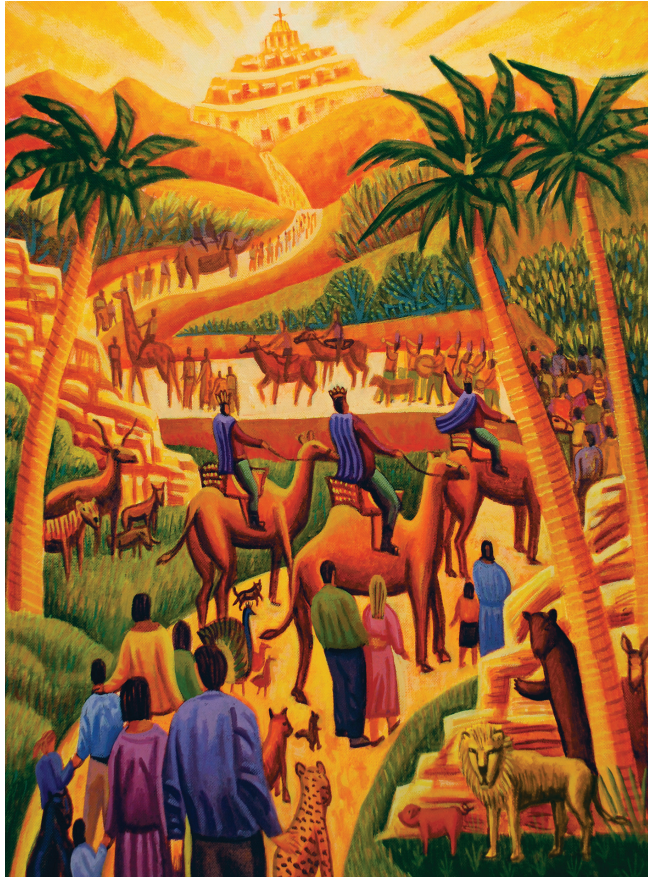


THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Star-Crossed

God our Creator
you guided the Magi to the infant
through the brightness of a star.
Gold, frankincense, and myrrh,
the Magi presented.
May the light of Scripture
guide our journey
as we offer to you
our worship and discipleship.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 8, 2023
Illumination and Glory



Today's readings: Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12. The radiance of God's glory is clear as we celebrate Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in the visit of the Magi. In the first reading, Isaiah addresses Jerusalem, saying, "Your light has come." Continuing, Isaiah tells of people from afar bringing gifts: "All from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praise of the LORD."

The Magi proclaim the Lord's birth, when they arrive in Jerusalem, inquiring, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews?" Alarmed at this query, the jealous King Herod begins a search for the one he considers a rival to his power. But this newborn is not destined to compete with the king.

Isaiah had foretold that the newborn would "shepherd my people Israel." This is not the language of an earthly ruler. Jesus continues to be manifest in us in the readings and the Eucharist. On this Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, we thank God for the gift of the Eucharist, a gift that we can continue to receive throughout our lives.

Matthew's Gospel is a particular type of Jewish story that intends to make a theological point and is heavily influenced by biblical tradition and diverse sources. These visitors to the holy family were clearly good-hearted, kindly, and motivated by faith in prophecy and astrology. Honor their generosity by extending good will and kindness to family, friends, and coworkers.



THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Tuesday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord

The readings of the Christmas season conclude with the heavens opening and a voice saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” What could be a more joyous way to end the season? During Christmas Time, we have experienced the birth of our Savior, the manifestation to the Magi, and Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan. As we enter Ordinary Time in winter, pause to reflect on each of these in-breakings of the kingdom and how they have affected you. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 42:1–4, 6–7, Psalm 29:1–2, 3–4, 9–10; or Acts 10:34–38; Matthew 3:13–17.*

Monday, January 23

Legal Protection of Unborn Children

The Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children weaves the secular with the sacred. Wherever we are on this day, we pray that God will protect all unborn children. Although the unborn are nameless to us, we can easily look around and offer thanks to God to all those who have been born. Consider using some of the photos from the Christmas cards that you have received this year to start a conversation with children about our belief that all life is sacred. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 9:1–6; Psalm 72:2, 3–4ab, 7–8, 11–12, 13–14; Matthew 5:1–12a.*

Wednesday, January 25

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul reminds us that conversion to deepen faith and service of others is sometimes sudden. For most people, though, conversion to living in Christ is gradual, like a never-ending timeline of good works, struggles, reconciliation, renewal, and stronger faith in Jesus. Today, pray that we may never hesitate to serve God by serving others with kindness and understanding. Pray also to follow the example of St. Paul and to learn from struggles, so that you can dedicate your life to following Christ. *Today’s*

readings: Acts 22:3–16 or Acts 9:1–22; Psalm 117:1bc, 2; Mark 16:15–18.

Thursday, February 2

The Presentation of the Lord

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is sometimes called Candlemas Day or the Feast of the Encounter in the Temple (by Eastern Christians). In the Gospel, we hear Simeon’s words of blessing and Anna’s prophecy. Many parishes bless candles for parishioners and for the year’s Masses today, a tradition that reminds us of the light of faith that we have through baptism. *Today’s readings: Malachi 3:1–4; Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Hebrews 2:14–18; Luke 2:22–40.*

Friday, February 3

St. Blaise

Little is known about St. Blaise, who was a bishop and martyr. He is celebrated as having healed a boy who was choking, likely on a bone. Recalling this miracle, the tradition of the blessing of throats arose around the eighth century. As throats are blessed with crossed candles close to the recipient’s neck, we ask God to heal all who suffer from diseases of the throat and “every other illness.” *Today’s readings: Hebrews 13:1–8; Psalm 27:1, 3, 5, 8b–9abc; Mark 6:14–29.*

Saturday, February 11

World Day of the Sick

On the optional Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, we recall the story of the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to St. Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes, France. Millions of pilgrims have visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes since 1862, when several miracles were confirmed as authentic. In 1992, Pope John Paul II named February 11 World Day of the Sick, a day of awareness of those who are ailing and for all who have no access to proper medical care. Today is an important intersection of loving awareness of all sick persons, with a memorial in the Church that celebrates God’s healing through the intercession of the Blessed Mother. *Today’s readings: Genesis 3:9–24; Psalm 90:2, 3–4ab, 5–6, 12–13; Mark 8:1–10.*

