

## THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Isaiah 60: 1 - 6

Ephesians 3: 2 - 3, 5 - 6

Matthew 2: 1 - 12

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"Arise! Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the Lord rises to shine on you. Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the Lord rises and appears over you." [Is. 60: 1 - 2](#)

Today is the Feast of the Epiphany: Epiphany, which means the revealing of Christ the Redeemer and Saviour to us through the coming of the Wise Men from the east.

In that passage, Isaiah speaks of the 'glory of the Lord.' Looking forward many centuries to the moment when: "The Word became flesh and lived among us. [And] we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." [Jn. 1: 14](#)

The ultimate revelation of God, which Isaiah prophesied, when he said: "The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us'). [Is. 7: 14](#) The prophecy, which bore fruit when the glory of the Lord, in an amazing way, shone over Mary.

"For the child within her [as the Angel of the Lord told Joseph] was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" [Mt. 1: 21](#) Jesus, who was born to Mary, brings salvation – healing - for our sins.

He is Immanuel, but not just God with us: He is God within us, through the Holy Spirit who shines His glory into all of us to bring Jesus to birth in our souls.

The light of the star drew the Wise Men to the glory of Jesus, the true light, in Bethlehem.

"The light [that] shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." [Jn. 1: 5](#)

But if we look back over the last year, does it not seem as if the darkness of the world has extinguished the light of the Lord?

Over the past year, I'm sure that times of thick darkness have covered our individual lives, one way or another, too.

And yet, in this thick darkness, the light of the glory of the Lord brings healing, joy and salvation to all who come, like the Wise Men, to the Child of Bethlehem.

And yet, in coming to the Child of Bethlehem, we can't escape the stark reality of suffering: because, in the coming of these Wise Men, the shadow of the Cross falls across Jesus.

It casts its shadow in the slaughter of the baby boys of Bethlehem by Herod, and of the Holy Family having to become refugees in Egypt to escape the tyrant.

Gallons of academic ink have been spilt, asking: were they Kings? Were there three of them - or more, or less? Was the star a supernova, a comet or a miraculous star? Is it all just a myth without any grounding in reality?

Anyhow, who were these Wise Men?

They were most likely astronomers from Persia who searched the universe for new stars or comets, which in the ancient world were thought to herald the birth of a new king.

Perhaps this is what they were, and what the Star of Bethlehem was.

We don't know for sure; and it doesn't really matter, and it completely misses the deep truth

Matthew is revealing to us in His Gospel.

He uses historical truths, blended with allegory – the symbolic expression of a deeper mystery – to reveal the truth about Jesus.

And, as Paul says: "The glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

[Col. 1: 27](#)

The Wise Men brought the best material gifts they could for a King: but even more than that; they gave of themselves.

Maybe these wise, learned, rich, and clever men had been searching for meaning and purpose in their lives for years.

When they discovered the star, they knew in their hearts that He was a special King: the One who would, somehow, be the answer to their searching.

The journey they took was a long, not only in distance but also in time and energy.

They didn't have the attitude that they couldn't be bothered, or that someone else could find the King and come back and tell them about Him.

They didn't wait for the King to come to them.

These Wise men thought it was worth spending possibly two years of their lives, leaving the comfort and security of their homes to face an unknown, and uncertain journey.

It was indeed a journey of faith: but faith, not as some vague sort of hope, but a certainty that what they would find would be the end of lifeless ways.

The Wise Men had open hearts and minds, and were prepared to accept the unexpected from God.

They risked everything on this mysterious star and, in Bethlehem, they found a seemingly ordinary child with His parents; yet: "They bowed down and worshipped him." Mt. 2: 11

They'd travelled hard and long, and found their way home; to their true home with Jesus.

Perhaps you feel that you don't need to take a journey of faith to the Lord because you've been a Catholic for years.

But maybe you've closed your heart and your mind to the possibility that the Lord is calling you to journey, like the Wise Men, into a deeper friendship with Him.

All of us, on our walk with Jesus, drift away from Him from time to time, or let our relationship with Him stagnate: I know, because it happens to me.

All of us need to: Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! [And] Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God! Is. 40: 3

So, together, let's use this Feast of the Epiphany to set out on that journey again.

Let's pray to the Lord that He will shed His light upon our hearts, so that we may pass through the shadows of this world, and reach the brightness of our eternal home with Him.