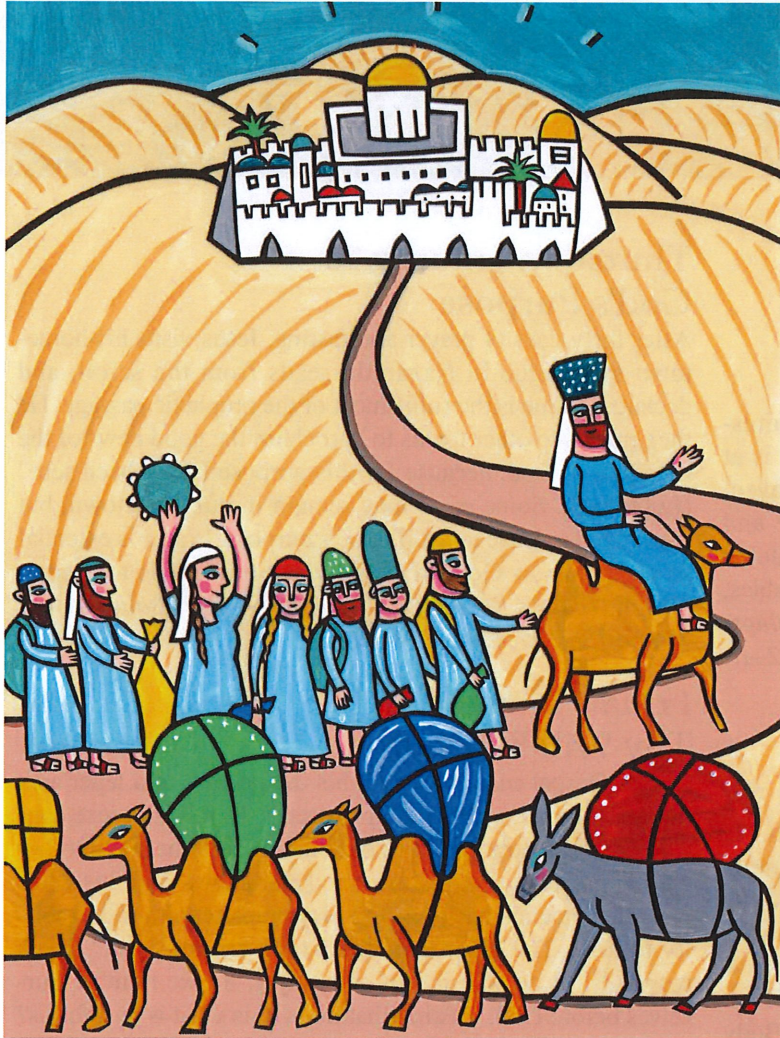


THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



A Light for All Nations

God of light,
on the first day of creation
you filled the world with your light;
you created humans in your image
and likeness
and gave them this place of light for
their home.
But they chose darkness, so you
sent prophets
with the promise of a great Light.
You gave us your Son, the Light
of the World,
a Light so radiant that all nations
would be drawn to him for all ages,
bringing gifts and offering praise.
May we always walk by his light
and never lose sight of him.
May we bring him the best we have,
a total offering of ourselves,
as Jesus offered himself completely for us.
We pray through his Most Holy Name.
Amen.

Sunday, January 6, 2019
A Revelation to the Gentiles

Today's Readings: Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12. The message of Christ's birth comes first to poor Jewish shepherds in the nearby countryside. They find Jesus just as the angel had said and return home praising and glorifying the Lord. Later, mysterious Magi from distant lands, following a star, come to see the newborn king to do him homage and give him precious gifts.

This pattern of revelation—first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles—is repeated during Jesus' lifetime and the early days of the Church. During his ministry, Jesus says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24); but he heals others who have great faith. After his Resurrection, he tells the Apostles to "make dis-

ciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19a); but at first much of their time is spent preaching the Gospel to Jews. When Paul, a persecutor of Christians, meets Jesus on the road to Damascus, he becomes a zealous Apostle. Jesus calms the fears of a disciple who is afraid of Paul by reassuring him that Paul "is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites" (Acts 9:15). With the tireless travels and preaching of Paul, and the eventual acceptance of the Gentiles by the other Apostles, the Church is established in communities far from Jerusalem.

The visit of the Magi foreshadows the spread of Christianity to the entire world. The birth of Jesus is indeed "good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10).



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 7

The Kingdom of God

After forty days in the desert, Jesus begins his public ministry, announcing “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He will preach tirelessly the kingdom of heaven, speaking in parables—stories with everyday people and familiar events for us to ponder. What is the kingdom? Where is it? When is it? If we listen carefully to the parables, we may begin to penetrate this mystery. *Today’s Readings: 1 John 3:22—4:6; Psalm 2: 7bc–8, 10–12a; Matthew 4:12–17, 23–25.*

Tuesday, January 8

Jesus Feeds Us

Jesus first teaches the five thousand and then feeds them. He calls them “sheep without a shepherd,” and his heart is moved with pity. Luke uses similar words to describe the Good Samaritan’s response to the injured man of the parable. When one’s heart is moved with pity, compassionate acts follow. Jesus shows us compassion every time we attend Mass: first he gives us the Word, and then he feeds us with his Body and Blood. What more could we want? *Today’s Readings: 1 John 4:7–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4, 7–8; Mark 6:34–44.*

Wednesday, January 9

The Cry of the Poor

John continues his treatise on love: “If God so loved us, we also must love one another.” For the people of Israel, love must be shown especially to the poor. Psalm 72 speaks of the king: “He rescues the poor when they cry out, / the oppressed who have no one to help. / He shows pity to the needy and the poor / and saves the lives of the poor.” Do we look for these same traits in our leaders? In ourselves? How can we show concern for the poor during these cold days of winter? *Today’s Readings: 1 John 4:11–18; Psalm 72:1–2, 10, 12–13; Mark 6:45–52.*

Thursday, January 10

God’s Purpose

After forty days of prayer and fasting, Jesus visits his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, reads from the scroll, and declares that he is the fulfillment of the prophetic passage. He then travels to other towns to “proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent” (Luke 5:43). Some of us may remain in our hometown, but some need to leave to fulfill God’s purpose. Prayer is essential so we can know God’s will and what we must do to accomplish it. *Today’s Readings: 1 John 4:19—5:4; Psalm 72:1–2, 14 and 15bc, 17; Luke 4:14–22a.*

Friday, January 11

Thy Will Be Done

Luke’s Gospel account highlights the posture of a leper asking Jesus for a cure: “he fell prostrate.” To fall is to lose control; to be prostrate is to make oneself little before another who is great. In this gesture, the leper shows both his complete dependence on Jesus and his complete faith in his ability to heal. The leper adds the words “if you wish”; Jesus responds, “I do will it.” In our prayer, do we humble ourselves before God, trusting that his will is what is best for us? *Today’s Readings: 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Luke 5:12–16.*

Saturday, January 12

I Must Decrease

The world would have us believe that increasing our wealth and fame will lead to happiness. Yet here is John the Baptist, whose call has been to prepare the way for the Savior, saying, “he must increase; I must decrease” once Jesus comes on the scene. As we age, retire from work, and lose our health, our active life decreases. If we have raised children, our interaction with them decreases when they leave home and make their own home. May we be gracious like John the Baptist, strong in prayer and desiring only that Christ increase. *Today’s Readings: 1 John 5:14–21; Psalm 149:1–2, 3–4, 5–6a and 9b; John 3:22–30.*



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KEEPING THE SEASONS
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2018-2019