

FOR THE WEEKEND OF JAN. 3-4, 2026

Epiphany of the Lord

Gospel Reading

Mt 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, 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."

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Intercession

May we reflect on the many gifts God has given to us and consider the ways we can honor our Lord with these gifts, including support of the Catholic Ministry Appeal.

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Gifts are central to our celebration of Christmas. The season is based on God's most profound gift to us: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). God took on human form in all

its frailty. Born an infant to dwell among us, he humbly experienced what we experience daily. He is our light and resurrection frees us from sin. There is no greater gift in all human history.

The Christmas season closes with Epiphany. When the three magi visit the Holy Family, they pay their respects by giving gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We, too, have gifts we can offer our Lord. In our parishes, we can share our musical abilities by singing in the choir, our business acumen by serving on the finance committee, or athletic experience by coaching sporting teams. We can contribute our professional talents to any number of organizations: free medical and dental clinics, tutoring programs, youth classes, and more. We can offer our time by volunteering in soup kitchens or with emergency pregnancy organizations. We can even simply dedicate all we do during the day to God's greater glory.

There are so many ways we can direct the gifts our Lord has given to us back to him, and this includes supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal and its initiatives that help build the Kingdom of God here on earth.

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There is a sense of mystery about the magi. Also referred to as three kings or three wise men (because they were probably well-versed in the sciences), they were not Jews who lived in close proximity to the Holy Family. They were Gentiles who came from the East (meaning, far away) in search of fulfillment. They found it in the Christ Child.

They remind us that people far and wide, from different nations, creeds, and races, are united in Christ. Jesus was born, and then died on the cross, to save all, not a select few. His birth is the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise that the "people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." The magi also remind us of Our Lord's apostolic mission to "go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). All are called to love as Jesus loved. All are welcome and enrich our Church. All are entrusted to Jesus' mission as his mission is universal in nature, not merely local, because it is centered on love.

The magi were strangers from a strange land who readily sought Jesus and revered him. May we, too, seek to welcome strangers in our midst by supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal and its programs that connect all of us in our common love of Christ.

Social Media Post/Content

Photo: Image of a bright star in a dark sky

Header: "They were overjoyed at seeing the star." – Matthew 2:10



Copy: May we greet this new year ahead of us with joy, seeking new ways to find our Lord as the magi did. Please prayerfully consider supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal with joy and generosity.