

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY**

Isaiah 60:1–6
Ephesians 3:2–3A, 5–6
Matthew 2:1–12

MONDAY* ***

Mark 1:7–11
“The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me”

TUESDAY

Mark 1:14–28
“... the kingdom of God has come near.”

WEDNESDAY

Mark 1:29–39
“Let us ... proclaim the message ... for that is what I came out to do.”

THURSDAY

Mark 1:40–45
“Be made clean!”

FRIDAY

Mark 2:2–12
“Son, your sins are forgiven.”

SATURDAY

Mark 2:13–17
“Follow me.”

Jesus, Light to the World



The feast of the Epiphany of the Lord is also sometimes called “Little Christmas.” It is an extension of our celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation—the Word made flesh who came to dwell among us.

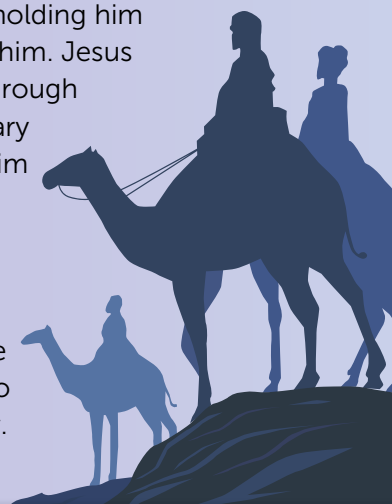
This feast celebrates Jesus’ manifestation. The Greek word *epiphania* means precisely a manifestation or a shining out. This is the moment anticipated by the prophet Isaiah who speaks to Jerusalem and announces, “Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you.”

Jesus comes among us as light not only for the people of Israel but for all the nations. And Saint Paul is clear about the universal value of Jesus in the second reading from the letter to the Ephesians. Jesus is light for Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Gospel account of the Epiphany contains two important details for our

own journeys of faith. The first is that Jesus is revealed to those who search for him. The Magi, or wise men from the East, set out on a long and arduous journey guided not only by a star but by a hope of encountering the newborn King of the Jews. Their patient and persevering journey and search becomes a model for our own quest to encounter the Lord.

The second detail has to do with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Saint Matthew tells us that the Magi saw the child with his mother. She is holding him and presenting him. Jesus is manifested through the hands of Mary who presents him to the world. The Lord’s manifestation uses human instruments. We all have a part to play in His story.



The Faith of the Church

The Church believes that Jesus is the light of all humanity, *lumen gentium*, as the opening words of the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Church* indicates. The Church understands its sacred mission and purpose in sharing that light with all people, so that all nations may be one in God. (Cf. the Second Vatican Council *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 1).



Questions of the Week

The Epiphany of the Lord was the manifestation of Emmanuel, God-with-us celebrated at Christmas. With the Magi, let us seek the Lord, as well.

Adults

What events and encounters with others have helped revealed to me that I am God’s son or daughter?

Children

Have there been times when I have called God “my Father,” as Jesus called God his Father?

*Alternate readings exist for this day.
**Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord
***Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Responding to God's Word . . .

In today's second reading, Saint Paul speaks of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to him for the sake of the people he serves. In other words, Paul is conscious that an extraordinary responsibility has been entrusted to him. He is aware that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and that Jesus is the Savior for all people. At the same time, Paul is aware of his own responsibility to bring this message and, indeed, the very person of Jesus to those entrusted to his care.

We can easily translate Paul's sense of responsibility to our own lives. We

are aware of Jesus, of the healing grace he brings to all humanity, and of the hope he offers everyone.

This awareness is not given to us to safeguard as a private possession. Like Paul, we need to recognize that we are instruments of the manifestation of Jesus to the world.

We do not need to think in dramatic terms. All we need to do is examine the circumstances of our lives, the places of daily living and work, and the faces of those we encounter on a regular basis. In these places and with these people, we can share—in what we say and do—Jesus who is light.



Meditation Moment

Years ago, an artist painted a striking picture, showing a solitary figure rowing a boat at night across an endless sea of water. Off in the distance is a solitary star shining in the night sky. The impression you get as you look at the picture is this: "If that boatman ever loses sight of that star, he's lost." What that painting says about the star, we can say about Jesus: "If we ever lose sight of Jesus, we are lost." Without Jesus the world is lost. Without him, there is not hope. Without him, the human race is lost.

For reflection . . .

How do I see Jesus as the Light in my world?

ADAPTED FROM *ILLUSTRATED HOMILIES* BY MARK LINK, SJ

Let Me Stay on the Journey

Lord, help me
to stay on the journey
in search of you. Help me
when I am tired. Help me when
I've lost my way. Help me when the
destination is not clear. Help me when
discouraging voices crowd out my
hope. Lord, help me to stay on the
journey with the sure knowledge
that you wait for me and are
my final destination.
Amen.

*Carry this thought in your heart
as a guide for your faith journey
this week.*

The Magi found Jesus, the Light of the world and returned home to share the One they found with all those whom they met. Go out and share the One who has brought you into the light.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. At mealtimes this week, introduce grace before meals and pray for the people in different parts of the world.

In the workplace or in school. Take one action that would enhance the dignity of co-workers (or a particular co-worker) or of fellow students.

In the community. Identify in your own reflections and, even better, in conversations with others how the community could be a more just environment for everyone.

Profile in Faith

Father Joseph Champlin

Father Joseph Champlin (died 2008) was a priest of the diocese of Syracuse, New York. He was a prolific writer who produced pastoral materials to help people be light to the world by the way they lived out their baptismal commitment, especially through the sacrament of marriage.

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Author: Louis J. Cameli

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