

My brothers and sisters, today is the **Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord**. The Greek word "**epiphany**" means God's appearance or manifestation of himself in human history. This solemnity brings out a prominent aspect of the Christmas Mystery, namely, the manifestation of the universal dominion of the Newborn King, and the readings for today's Mass describe this manifestation as **a light that appears in a world covered in darkness** (Is. 60:1). Christ's coming meant that God didn't leave us in the darkness. He intervened, and made it possible for us to respond to his **truth, grace and love, and so come into the light**.

The following are some of the manifestations of Jesus: one, at his birth in Bethlehem, **the shepherds recognized him as their Savior** (Lk.2:10-11); two, making himself known to the wise men from the East which we have heard from today's Gospel (Mt.2:6); three, at his baptism the Spirit of God descending upon him and reviewed him as the **Beloved Son of God** (Mt.3:17); Finally, changing water into wine at Cana, his disciples "**put their faith in him**" (Jn. 2:12). Let us focus on today's readings.

Although Matthew does not tell us the names of the wise men, in the West, they have traditionally been given the names Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar. The journey the wise men made to Bethlehem was not the only journey they made. They also made **a journey into their hearts from paganism to worshipping Jesus**. On our part, each and everyone has a journey to make to Jesus because none of us is yet fully converted and each of us has **corners in our hearts and lives in need of Jesus' healing and redemption**. We pray that God may lead us as he did for the wise men, ever closer to his Son Jesus. We pray that all nations may come to know that Jesus is the one Savior and that all nations may fall prostrate before him.

Some scholars have tried to show that there was indeed a special "Star of Bethlehem." Michael Molnar in his book *The Star of Bethlehem: the Legacy of the Magi* and David Hughes in his book *The Star of Bethlehem: an Astronomer's Confirmation* have researched on the extraordinary celestial conditions that could account for the Star of Bethlehem. Many documents and archeological finds prove the historical reliability of events and people related in the Bible. The most important thing for us is the meaning of Sacred Scripture; therefore, today, I would like to reflect on the meaning of the visit of the Magi to Jesus.

We imagine ourselves in the presence of baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We are surprised to see men of eastern appearance come. They see baby Jesus and **fall on their knees**. They offered him homage and gave him presents of **gold, frankincense and myrrh**; gold because Jesus is king, frankincense since Jesus is divine and myrrh prefiguring his Passion. They tell us about the star and about Herod who knew nothing about Jesus' birth. After their departure we spend time with baby Jesus. Baby Jesus, we do not have gold, frankincense and myrrh to give you, but we give you our heart.

Baby Jesus, even while you were only a little baby you experienced both acceptance from the wise men and rejection from Herod. The wise men and Herod had two opposing attitudes, searching for God and being closed to God. Baby Jesus, we see that the wise men were blessed in their search for you by finding you...

We have a lot of lessons to learn about the wise men and Herod; they have different attitudes to life. The wise men were generous; Herod was selfish, wanting to hold on to his throne. The wise men, gave you gifts to Jesus; Herod killed all boys under two years of age. The wise men were willing to put energy and goodness into life, Herod wanted to get all he could from life. The wise men, who sacrificed to put into life were happy, Herod who took all he could from life, was unhappy. May the Baby Jesus, helps us to foster a healthy attitude towards life, through giving and caring, instead of being grasping, and being selfish and possessive. Let us pray, now, by asking Jesus to help us develop ever more wholesome attitudes towards life.....

Finally, dear friends, when the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, it seems they no longer had the guidance of the star; that is why they asked Herod for help. Sometimes, like the wise men, we too feel as if we're in the dark, like the wise men. Sometimes what we relied on seems not to be there anymore. Sometimes we see only darkness around us. But the good news is that we know that God is there, and that eternal life awaits us even if sometimes in this world there is no star for us. Let us pray that, in our moments of darkness, without a star, may God help us not to give up but to keep searching, hoping and praying until we see him, love him and worship him like the wise men. May each day in our life be a continuous searching for Christ so that we will have intimate relationship with him now and forever. Amen!