



Bringing Home the Word

The Epiphany of the Lord January 8, 2017

Enter the Mystery

By Mary Katharine Deeley

A quick glance at the Internet or a magazine rack will reveal multitudes of personality quizzes. Some actually help us understand why we do things and interact with people the way we do. Many just make us laugh. From the ridiculous (“if you were a dog, you would be a cocker spaniel”) to the sometimes uncomfortably true (“you are an introvert who really likes to plan things”), these human-made signs can point us in particular directions that may or may not be helpful.

But the God of mystery can and does use the signs we look at to reveal his presence and call us to discipleship. To the Magi who looked at the heavens, God’s sign was a star. To people who had lived for so long in dark times, God revealed himself as light and truth. To those who understood that their faith in God could strengthen them when times were rough and exhort them when all was well, God presented himself as one of them, fully human and fully divine, the very essence of love.

We look in many places and faces for evidence of God, but we get distracted and often miss what we’re looking for. God uses whatever is necessary—personality quizzes, magazines, plans, books, nature, and other people to get us moving in the right direction. “We saw his star,” said the Magi. What have you looked at this Christmas? And have you seen God there? †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 60:1–6

“Though darkness covers the earth,...upon you the LORD will dawn.”

Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

“The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise.”

Matthew 2:1–12

“Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

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to reveal his presence.”*

A Word From Pope Francis

The Wise Men entered into the mystery. They passed from human calculations to the mystery: this was their conversion. And our own? Let us ask the Lord to let us undergo that same journey of conversion experienced by the wise men. Let us ask him to protect us and to set us free from the temptations which hide the star. To let us always feel the troubling question: “Where is the star?” whenever...we lose sight of it. To let us know ever anew God’s mystery, and not to be scandalized by the “sign.”

—Homily, Epiphany,
Vatican Basilica,
January 6, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- What attitudes are you hoping to grow in your life this Advent?
- What miracles of growth has Jesus provided in your life?



Revealing God's Plan

By Margaret Nutting Ralph, PhD

As we dive into the mysteries of our faith, it's important to know from where those mysteries spring. The Catholic Church understands both Scripture and Tradition as expressions of the word of God. Each is a form of revelation.

Scripture is the result of a long, five-step process that took place within a believing community. First, there was experiencing God in the events of salvation history. God revealed God's self through events including

the Exodus of the Hebrew people from Egypt and their entrance into the Holy Land. Second came the sharing of stories of the people of God by word of mouth. Third came committing the stories to writing, and fourth, the editing of these written stories. Then, the fifth and final step, came prayerfully selecting which written and edited stories to include in the Bible. The books that became part of the Bible are those that the believing community received and found nourishing, used in their worship

services, and chose to pass on to every generation.

It is one of the Church's roles to interpret Scripture so that it is not just a historical word but a living word. This is how Tradition is now rooted, nourished, and ruled by that Bible, while at the same time having given birth to the same Bible. The Church's ongoing teaching, rooted in the apostolic tradition but applied to new settings for each generation, is called Tradition. As the Church is nourished and ruled by Scripture, its teaching voice applies core biblical teaching to new situations, and because we believe that the Church continues to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, these teachings become part of Tradition, part of the revelation that God has given God's people. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, January 2013
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A Sign From God

By Dennis J. Billy CSsR

The star that guided the Wise Men from the East to Bethlehem is an enduring symbol of a divine mystery. Tradition says these men were astrologers who searched the heavens for portents of things to come. They followed this star because they believed it would lead them to a sign from God.

Indeed, it was a sign from God promising to guide them to a distant place where God would reveal himself in a palpable way. Yet what they found at the end of their journey was not what they expected. God not only embraced our human condition but did so in extreme poverty.

God's entrance onto the world stage

was humble and without airs. He came in the silence of night. Even the star of Bethlehem that shone in Judea's western sky was modest and subdued. Many saw it but failed to understand its significance. Many yearned for a sign but did not know what to look for.

Only the Wise Men saw the star and sensed its meaning. Only they had the faith and courage to follow it on a journey that would change their lives and those of all humanity. Only they would greet God's gift to the world with gifts of their own: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts of Christmas point to Jesus' kingly status, his divine origins, and his impending death: gold representing royalty; frankincense, the prayerful worship due to God; and myrrh, the ointment that would embalm the body of the crucified Lord.

Together, they point to the mystery of the Incarnation and embody the meaning of Jesus' name: "God saves." †

Source: *Liguorian*, December 2011
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Lord, your light gives us strength and shows us the way to God. Remove my blindness that I may see the light of goodness, peace, and love within myself and others.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 9–13

Mon. Baptism of the Lord: Is 42:1–4, 6–7
or Acts 10:34–38 / Mt 3:13–17
Tue. Weekday:
Heb 2:5–12 / Mk 1:21–28
Wed. Weekday:
Heb 2:14–18 / Mk 1:29–39

Thu. Weekday:
Heb 3:7–14 / Mk 1:40–45
Fri. Weekday:
Heb 4:1–5, 11 / Mk 2:1–12
Sat. Weekday:
Heb 4:12–16 / Mk 2:13–17