



# Bringing Home the Word

*The Epiphany of the Lord (A)*

January 8, 2023

## A Christ for Every Nation

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

“Go back where you came from!” What if the Magi heard this when they came to the place where the Child was and heeded that derisive message? The “signs of the times” that they read told them a king had been born. They might not have known exactly where to look, but they knew what they were looking for, and they recognized that king when they found him. These righteous men were not Israelites, yet God revealed this great mystery to them. Furthermore, there is no indication that they eventually became Israelites. Rather, “they departed for their country” (Matthew 2:12). God

really does not play favorites.

Then how are we to understand the claim of being God’s Chosen People, whether ancient Israelites or the Christian community? What’s the point of being chosen if you are not the favorite? While acknowledging God’s special love for his Chosen People, both Isaiah and Paul answer this question. The prophet claims that “nations will walk by your light, kings by the radiance of your dawning” (Isaiah 60:3), and Paul writes, “the stewardship of God’s grace...was given to me for your benefit” (Ephesians 3:2). In other words, some have been chosen by God to bring the light of God’s love to others.

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates two important realities—the revelation of God to all people and the responsibility to reveal that astounding mystery to others. The Magi personify both realities. They were men of another faith tradition to whom God revealed the mystery of the Incarnation, and they returned home and probably proclaimed to others the wonder of that mystery. +

*Some have been chosen by God to bring the light of God’s love to others.*

### A Word from Pope Francis

The Magi humbled themselves before the unheard-of logic of God. They welcomed the Lord not the way they had imagined him to be, but as he was, small and poor. Their prostration is the sign of those who place their own ideas aside and make room for God. It takes humility to do this.

Angelus, Rome, January 6, 2022



## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 60:1–6

Arise! Shine, for your light has come, the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you.

### Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

### Matthew 2:1–12

They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How respectful are you of the religious quests of others?
- In what ways might your life shine the light of God’s love on others?

# The Stranger Knows Him

By Paige Byrne Shortal

Today's Gospel is very familiar to us. We have mental pictures of the three Wise Men traveling by night, riding camels, wearing rich robes, and each carrying treasure boxes full of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The passage we hear today is the first half of chapter 2 of Matthew's Gospel, ending with the adoration of the child by the Magi and the warning they received in a dream not to return to Herod. The rest of the chapter includes the flight into Egypt by Joseph and Mary with their newborn baby, the massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem as Herod's men sought to rid the world of the infant king, and the return to Israel of the Holy Family after the death of Herod. It's a short chapter, only twenty-three verses, and it's all St. Matthew writes about Jesus before his baptism in the Jordan.

Saint Matthew was writing for Jewish Christians, and he took for granted that his audience knew Jewish history and the law and the prophets. In this short chapter, Matthew quotes the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) four times and each quote contains the name of a place—Bethlehem, Egypt, Ramah, and Nazareth. Why is Matthew



doing this? He is pointing out to the Jewish community that this Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophets and the answer to their prayers; that he is not a stranger.

Luke, who was writing for Gentile Christians, mentions a different group who recognized Jesus. In his Gospel, he doesn't speak of the stranger but of the poor—the shepherds—who were the first to know him.

It seems that the Jewish religious and

political leaders should have recognized the Messiah. Herod consulted the chief priests and scribes, and they knew where he was to be born. Instead, strangers from the east, who had only a rumor to go by, welcomed him and did him homage.

Just so, it is possible for us to know the teachings but not know the teacher; to know the way but remain stuck on the path. The stranger sees what the native misses. The foreigner values what the citizen takes for granted. The poor and the alien recognize God.

Today we celebrate Epiphany—the light shines for all and into all hearts. Do we like what we see? If not, let's agree that rejecting the light of truth isn't the wisest response. Jesus promised that the truth will set us free (John 8:32). Garfield the cartoon cat said, "The truth will set you free...but first it will make you miserable!"

Have a blessed Epiphany! +

*It is possible for us to know the teachings but not know the teacher; to know the way but remain stuck on the path.*

## PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, so that our homes may be havens of peace, our families a source of joy, our children safe, and our elders respected, we pray—Be born in us, be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 9–14

**Monday**, Baptism of the Lord: Is 42:1–4, 6–7 or Acts 10:34–38 / Mt 3:13–17

**Tuesday**, Weekday:  
Heb 2:5–12 / Mk 1:21–28 or  
Heb 1:1–6; 2:5–12 / Mk 1:14–20; 1:21–28

**Wednesday**, Weekday:  
Heb 2:14–18 / Mk 1:29–39

**Thursday**, Weekday:  
Heb 3:7–14 / Mk 1:40–45

**Friday**, Weekday:  
Heb 4:1–5, 11 / Mk 2:1–12

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
Heb 4:12–16 / Mk 2:13–17

Bringing Home  
the Word 

January 8, 2023

© 2023 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2023 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.