



January 7, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

The Epiphany of the Lord

Is 60:1-6 | Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 | Mt 2:1-12

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

It's interesting how an event can be interpreted by different people. God's revelation of himself in the birth of the child Jesus is clearly one such event. The Magi, Gentiles from the east, had heard of this "newborn king of the Jews" and undertook a long and arduous journey to see him and offer him homage. They were edified and eager in their search. Herod, himself a king - of the Jews - did not have the same reaction. The very thought of this "newborn king" threatened him and filled him with rage and suspicion. In this moment in human history, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles (i.e., the Epiphany) unveils the truth of God's redemptive work for all of creation to be reconciled to himself. This truth has been accepted and rejected throughout time, and our celebration of this feast gives us an opportunity to give thanks in a focused and particular way for our acceptance of it - to give thanks for the gift of our faith. Perhaps it is even a moment for us to have our own, colloquial epiphany: an "aha moment," where we once again truly understand the depth of God's love for us.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

The Magi, the Gentiles from the east, were changed after their encounter with the Christ Child; they were warned not to return to Herod and they obeyed and took a different route home. In today's second reading, St. Paul says it has been revealed that Gentiles are "coheirs, members of the same body" - the body of Christ. Just as the magi were forever changed by their journey, so must we be. Their journey is a model for us, but we do not have to seek Christ in the world as they did; he is here with us, in Word and in the Eucharist. The Incarnation of Jesus is pure gift to our weary, troubled world. As we heard in Isaiah, "rise up! ... [our] light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon [us]." As the Magi followed the light of the star, let us rise to the occasion and respond to God's light in our world by recognizing the good gifts God gives us each day. And then thank him for his enduring presence in our lives.

PRAY *Lord God of heaven and earth,
you revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation
by the guidance of a star ...
Fill us with the light of Christ,
that our concern for others may reflect your love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*
(from USCCB Epiphany prayer for blessing of home)

Church of the Ascension

Saratoga, California

www.ascensionsaratoga.org

408-725-3939

Mass Schedule

(Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p

(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a

Is Epiphany about giving or getting gifts?

"We three kings of Orient are/ bearing gifts we traverse afar." Nowhere in the gospels does it claim there are three kings. They are magi, hereditary priests of the ancient Medes and Persians. At least the carol gets one thing right: this wise group does bear gifts. Gold symbolizes wealth and power. Frankincense, used in prayer, represents the divine Presence. Myrrh prepares bodies for burial. It's an ominous sign that would make a startling gift. . . . But they were appropriate honors for the King of the Universe, the Divine Son, and the crucified Lord.

We also bear Jesus gifts at every Eucharist: bread, wine, and our financial sacrifice. "Made by human hands," these gifts are transformed and returned to us as the Body and Blood of Christ, and then redistributed for those in need.

More gifts come to us by way of this shared Table. Grace pours out on the assembly. Grace forgives sin, and rescues us from every evil. This is one gift you don't want to put at the bottom of a closet. - Alice Camille

Quotes

"The Magi experienced longing; they were tired of the usual fare. They were all too familiar with, and weary of, the Herods of their own day. But there, in Bethlehem, was a promise of newness, of gratuitousness."

- Pope Francis

"Love is the epiphany of God in our poverty."

- Thomas Merton

Men's Club

Men's Club Meeting In-Person
Worner Hall/Lounge Room
Friday January 12 6:00pm

Acknowledgments for Charitable Donations

Thank you to those who so generously donated during this holy season to:

-Catholic Charities -Help One Child -Layette Drive.

All your gifts have been gratefully accepted.

Your donations to the Layette Drive benefit needy infants living in the streets, cars, and rented garages. The program has been able to serve about 450 infants during these Covid years. The Layette Program operates throughout the year. If you have something to share beyond the holiday season, please call Marguerite at 408-234-6188.

MASS INTENTIONS

Jan 06	Sat	05 pm	Joseph McComiskey (L)
Jan 07	Sun	07 am	Dianne Ochoa +
		09 am	Carol McLafferty (L)
		11 am	Jim Bastholm +
		05 pm	Jerry Wheat +
Jan 13	Sat	09 am	Bianca Andrews (L)

WEEKLY OFFERING - DEC 31

-\$6,302 (baskets: \$5,490; online: \$812). Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: \$162,660. Budget: \$175,500. Shortfall: \$12,840.

Thank you for your generous support.



Jesus and the Eucharist

Eucharistic Revival Study

You're invited to participate in the "Jesus and the Eucharist" small group study, starting on January 14, Sunday, after the 9:00 am Mass in the Church of the Ascension.

"Jesus and the Eucharist" is a dynamic, 7-session study designed to help you connect with your fellow parishioners as you fall deeper in love with our Eucharistic Lord. Immerse yourself in the beauty of our faith, hear from some of the most brilliant voices in Catholicism, and explore the mystery of the Eucharist anew as a part of the National Eucharistic Revival.

In preparation for this small group study, you can watch the entire series at FORMED, an online resource available to Ascension parishioners. Just type "Formed.org Jesus and the Eucharist" into a search engine. It's free of charge! If they ask for the passcode, it's "Ascension."

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity," Psalm 133:1 exclaims. Unfortunately, Christian disunity is still a reality although followers of Christ have come a long way on the journey toward mutual respect and cooperation.

In response to Christ's prayer "that they all may be one" (John 17:21), the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is observed annually from January 18-25. It started as the Church Unity Octave at Graymoor in Garrison, New York, in 1908. Since 1966, the week has been jointly sponsored by the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.

The theme for this year is "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbor as yourself" (cf. Luke 10:27). That's a statement by a lawyer who earlier asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" The commitment to love can help others know that we are Christians and lead us closer to the day when Christians are more united than divided.

MLK celebration

Celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King
When? 6 pm, Monday, January 15
Where? Steps of Saratoga City Hall,
13777 Fruitvale Ave, Saratoga.

Vocations Upcoming Events

-Jan 21: Revs vs Sems Basketball Challenge at St. Francis High School. Doors open 5pm.

-Jan 26-28: Men's Discernment Retreat at St. Patrick Seminary.