

January 4, 2026

# 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

Have you ever had a moment where you've been so joyful that your heart "throbbed and overflowed"? (Is. 60:5) Perhaps this prompt might call to mind moments we have been chosen or noticed, especially when we otherwise felt sidelined or forgotten. (Imagine expecting to be picked last for the team, only to be someone's first choice!) Today's first reading speaks of a moment like that. While the nations of the earth are shrouded in darkness, God shines his light and glory on Jerusalem, and all the nations come streaming to her bearing precious tributes. Similarly, our Gospel speaks about how God chose Bethlehem — a seemingly insignificant town — to be the birthplace of his Son: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people." Like Jerusalem and Bethlehem, we, too, have been chosen by God. As we continue our celebration of Christmas, our hearts are filled to overflowing when we recall that by taking on our flesh, God has chosen to make his home with us for all eternity.

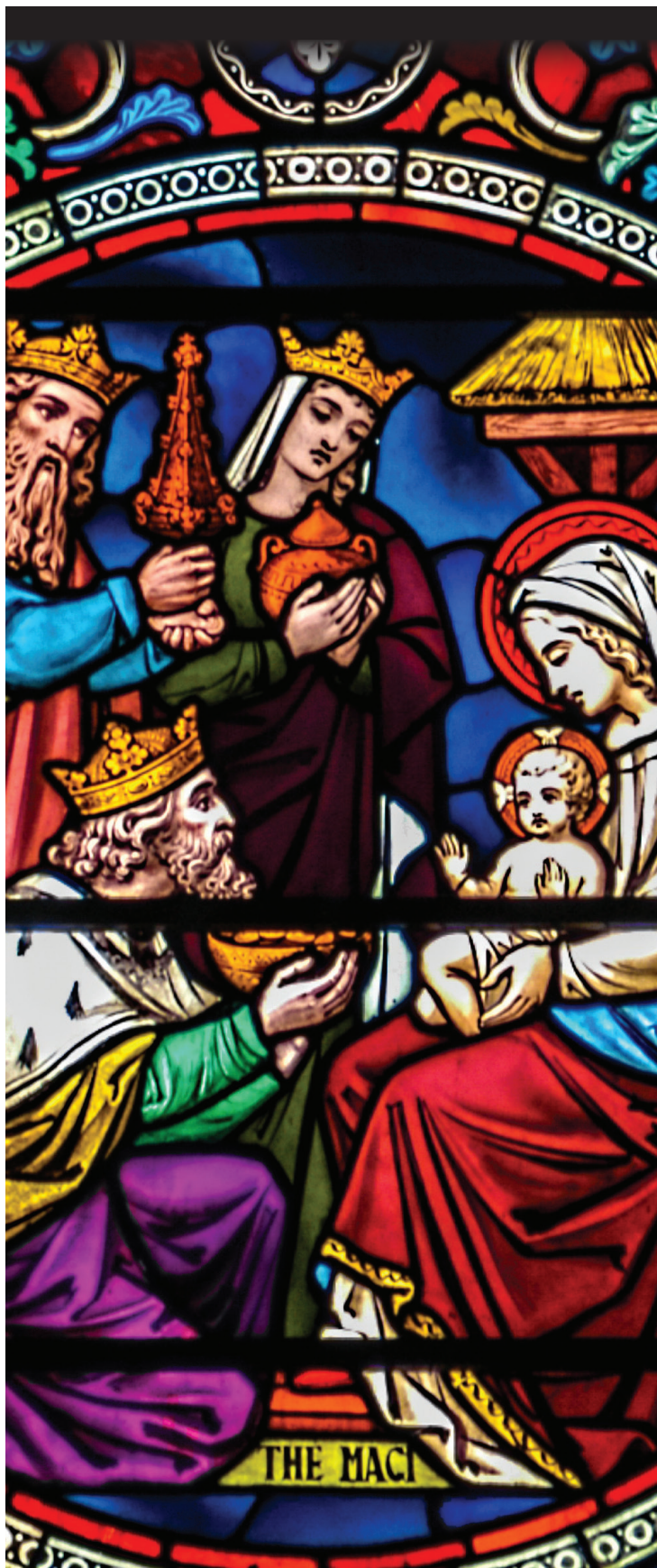
## **GO** EVANGELIZE

### PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Paul reminds us that God has chosen us, not only for ourselves, but for the sake of others: "You have heard of the stewardship of *God's grace that was given to me for your benefit.*" God gives Paul a special revelation to know the mystery of God so he could preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and to all peoples. We who know the joy of having been chosen to be God's beloved sons and daughters have the beautiful task of helping others to know that they, too, are chosen by God. Because of this, evangelization is not simply an item on our spiritual to-do list; it is a work of joy — the joy of helping others to discover their own "belovedness" as children of God. And of course, this message is for *everyone!*

## INVITATION

One of the best presents we can offer to someone is our presence. Make an effort this week to intentionally spend time with someone who may feel lonely or forgotten, setting aside other tasks to focus entirely on them. The goal is to help them feel special and *chosen* as a way of giving a glimpse of God's love that chooses each of us out of the many. May the gift of your presence help them to remember how very loved they are.



## Church of the Ascension

ascensionsaratoga.org | 408-725-3939

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

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

Confessions: (Sat) 4p – 4:45p

## Spoken through the Prophets

Historically speaking, the various deities revered by tribes and cultures around the world usually did little more than reinforce the position of those in power. From the Egyptians to the Aztecs, civilizations usually were led by a religious elite who controlled the resources, made the decisions, and "spoke for the gods." That is what makes the testimony of the Jewish prophets so remarkable. They regularly took the rich and powerful to task while advocating for the poor and marginalized. Anyone who doubts the authenticity of biblical literature should pause to consider the striking originality of the prophetic testimony. Surely that testimony would not have survived the censorship of the Jewish elites unless a Higher Power was calling the shots! Take time to read the divinely inspired scriptures that are foundational to our faith. *-Takefiveforfaith.com*

## Holy Father's January Prayer Intention

Let us pray that our prayers with the Word of God become nourishment for our lives and a source of hope within our communities, helping us to foster a more fraternal and missionary Church.

## Parish Mission with Fr. Michael Moore

1/31 & 2/1 (Sat & Sun Masses)

Introducing Mission

2/2 - 2/5 (Mon-Thu AM & PM)

Mission

Mark your calendar. More details will be provided.

## Thank you!

Thank you for your generous Christmas gifts and year-end donations. May the Lord continue to bless you in the New Year for your generosity.

## WEEKLY OFFERING - Dec. 28

-Total: **\$6,898** (\$6,080 + online: \$818). Goal: \$6,800.

-YTD Sunday: **\$166,816**. Budget: \$176,800.

-Retired Religious: \$25 (YTD: \$2,518).

-Archdiocese for Military Services: \$25 (YTD: 2,205)

-Christmas YTD: **\$21,177**.

Thank you for your generosity.

## MASS INTENTIONS

Jan 03	Sat	05 pm	Richard Firato +
Jan 04	Sun	07 am	Gary S. H. Chang +
		11 am	Adelaida Sichon +
		05 pm	Mark Firato & Family
Jan 05	Mon	08 am	Paul Phung +
Jan 06	Tue	08 am	The Maynard Family
Jan 07	Wed	08 am	Father Rey Sarmiento +
Jan 08	Thu	08 am	David Honor (L)
Jan 09	Fri	08 am	Amelia & David Wiele (L)
Jan 10	Sat	09 am	Noel Park (L)

"The Lord bless you

and keep you!

The Lord let his face

shine upon you,

and be gracious to you!

The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"

- Numbers 6:24-26



## Christmas in January?

Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas in January (usually the 7th) because they follow the traditional Julian calendar (13 days behind the Gregorian calendar) for religious holidays.

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine, however, officially celebrates Christmas on December 25, aligning with most of the world. This change became law in 2023, driven by the Orthodox Church of Ukraine adopting the Revised Julian calendar and symbolizing a move away from Soviet and Russian influences, a sentiment heightened by the ongoing war. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate still celebrates Christmas on January 7.

## Epiphany and Theophany

Epiphany and Theophany both mean "manifestation," but differ in usage: Epiphany (Western churches) often focuses on the Magi's visit - a revelation of Christ to humanity, while Theophany (Eastern churches) refers to Jesus' baptism - a revelation of the Most Holy Trinity.

## When Does Christmas Season End?

Jan. 12, Monday after the Feast of the Lord's Baptism.

## Jubilee 2025 Comes to a Close

The Holy Year 2025 officially concludes on January 6, 2026, as the last Jubilee Holy Door will be closed at St. Peter's Basilica at 9:30 am with a Mass presided over by Pope Leo XIV. January 6 is traditionally the Feast of the Epiphany although it's transferred to the closest Sunday between January 2 and January 8.

## Continue to Be Pilgrims of Hope

"The Jubilee is coming to an end; however, the hope that this Year has given us does not finish: we will continue to be pilgrims of hope! We heard from Saint Paul: "For in this hope we were saved" (Rm 8:24). Without hope, we are dead; with hope, we come to the light. Hope is generative. Indeed, it is a theological virtue, that is, a strength of God, and as such it does not kill, but gives birth and rebirth. This is true strength. What threatens and kills is not strength: it is arrogance, it is aggressive fear, it is evil that does not generate anything. The strength of God gives birth. This is why I would like to say to you, finally: to hope is to generate." *- Pope Leo's address to Jubilee audience on December 20, 2025*

## Men's Club

Meeting in the Hall Lounge, Friday, Jan 9, 6:00pm.