

wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea', they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Reflections on the Gospel



THE SAVING WORD

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD / B

03 JANUARY 2021

SAVIOUR OF ALL PEOPLE

Today's feast of the Epiphany is the only Sunday in the three-year cycle in which the readings remain exactly the same. That in itself should lead us to take seriously Isaiah's summons to lift up our eyes, look around, and see that all people are called to sing God's praises as equals.

Changing our point of view is not always easy, and the process of seeing, understanding and accepting the point of view of the other person is challenging. What is really our attitude to those who see the world differently to ourselves?

The people of Israel were encouraged to see themselves as the people specially favoured by God. They had suffered much at the hands of foreign nations who were more likely to destroy their Temple than worship in it. Isaiah's entreaty to see the nations around them as people who were also searching for the living God required a significant change of perspective.

Paul continues to develop Isaiah's vision as he seeks to open the eyes of Jewish Christians to the fact that the mystery of God's plan is now revealed in Jesus Christ. Now the old barriers which had existed between Jews and Gentiles have been torn down. Now all people can share in the same inheritance, promises, and relationship with God. It is Matthew who gives the forceful reminder that the first people to recognise Jesus' kingship were outsiders. It is not only their presents but their presence that provides a precious gift.

FIRST READING

Isa 60:1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The glory of the Lord shines upon you.

Arise, shine out Jerusalem, for your light has come,

the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears.

The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round:

all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full;

since the riches of the sea will flow to you; the wealth of the nations come to you;

camels in throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;

everyone in Sheba will come,

bringing gold and incense

and singing the praise of the Lord.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 71:1-2, 7-13. R. v. 11

R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king,/ to a king's son your justice,/ that he may judge your people in justice/ and your poor in right judgement. **R.**

2. In his days justice shall flourish/ and peace till the moon fails./ He shall rule from sea to sea,/ from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**

3. The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts/ shall pay him tribute./ The kings of Sheba and Seba/ shall bring him gifts./ Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,/ all nations shall serve him. **R.**



4. For he shall save the poor when they cry/ and the needy who are helpless./ He will have pity on the weak/ and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

SECOND READING

Eph 3:2-3, 5-6

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

The revelation means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body.

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia! / We have seen his star in the East; / and have come to adore the Lord. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 2:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

We have come from the East to worship the King.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some