

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Chalk the Door 20 + C + M + B + 17

Gracious God,
as a shining star once guided the Magi,
Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar,
to the home of the infant Jesus,
bless this home and all who live here
with your loving and welcoming presence.
May all who follow your star
and dwell in your love
become a light for the world.
May your love be our inspiration,
your wisdom be our guide,
and your peace be our blessing.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 8, 2017

Every Nation on Earth Will Adore You

Today's Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12. The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord is one of universal recognition of Christ as Savior. The images of a light rising in the east and of a star guiding wise foreigners to a simple home are full of symbolism. Yet it is a very earthly reality. One bright star in a dark winter sky can attract our attention. The morning sun rising in the east is a promise of a new day, when the darkness of night is ending. It is a global experience and a very human experience that underscores the depth of Christ's coming.

For whom has Christ come? Who will recognize him? On Epiphany, we are drawn to a broader meaning for each of these questions. In the opening lines of the First Reading, Isaiah announces: "Your light has come," and then, "nations shall come to your light." In the dark and cold of winter, notice that Christ can be found in simple places, in complex people, and often in unexpected exchanges with those who are foreign to us. Epiphany is our opportunity to welcome guests from afar, to open our doors and our hearts to unexpected wisdom from strangers.



THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday, January 9

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The baptism of Jesus by John is a pivotal event, in which the Spirit not only descends from the heavens, but propels Jesus into his public ministry. Our Baptism does the same. We are anointed by the Spirit to serve others, to live our lives publicly as sons and daughters of the living God. May we reflect the power of the Spirit as did Jesus by “going about doing good” (Acts 10:38). *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 42:1–4, 6–7 or Acts 10:34–38; Psalm 29:1–2, 3–4, 9–10; Matthew 3:13–17.*

Tuesday, January 17

St. Anthony, Abbot

St. Anthony (251–356) was a hermit, living and praying in the desert and caves of Egypt. While he longed to live a solitary, ascetic life, he was integrally connected to the world. His insights as a spiritual leader drew other monks and hermits to him, and his healing power was widely known, drawing the sick and destitute to him as well. His biographer and bishop, St. Athanasius, sought him for advice, and even Emperor Constantine wrote to him, asking for prayers. Humble in his popularity, Anthony simply directed everyone to God, Scripture, and prayer. *Today’s Readings: Ephesians 6:10–13, 18; Psalm 16:1–2a, 5, 7–8, 11; Matthew 19:16–26.*

Saturday, January 21

St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr

Today in Rome the Pope blesses two lambs, a tradition held since the sixth century. “Lamb” is the English translation of *Agnus*, which is so close to *Agnes* that many would mix up the two words. While St. Agnes is frequently depicted in artwork holding a lamb, the Latin name is the only connection with her life and martyrdom. The wool from the lambs blessed today will be woven into palliums and given to new archbishops this summer. *Today’s Readings: 1 Corinthians 1:26–31; Psalm 23:1b–3a, 4, 5, 6; Matthew 13:44–46.*

Thursday, January 26

Sts. Timothy and Titus, Bishops

Discipleship underscores the feast of Sts. Timothy and Titus, both companions of St. Paul during his years of travel and ministry. Timothy served as bishop in Ephesus, while Titus became bishop in Crete. Just as Jesus appointed the seventy-two (Luke 10) to spread the Good News and do good works, Paul wrote letters to both men, commissioning them to continue to serve in these two diverse areas of ancient Christianity. *Today’s Readings: 2 Timothy 1:1–8 or Titus 1:1–5; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 7–8a, 10; Luke 10:1–9.*

Thursday, February 2

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Candles are at the center of today’s feast as we liturgically close a focus on the childhood of Jesus and emphasize that Christ is the Light of the World. A solemn candlelight procession is the ritual centerpiece for the feast. In the home, families could light candles during a prayer celebration that would focus on the light Christ brings to the world. *Today’s Readings: Malachi 3:1–4; Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Hebrews 2:14–18; Luke 2:22–40.*

Monday, February 6

St. Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

Today the Martyrs of Japan are remembered, twenty-six of whom endured a 600-mile death march, public abuse, and finally crucifixion in 1597. The suffering and faithfulness of these Japanese individuals is epitomized by Paul Miki. A Jesuit brother, he preached from the cross upon which he died, his words continuing to strengthen his companions and provide witness to the world. These martyrs lived the words of St. Paul in today’s Second Reading: “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.” *Today’s Readings: Galatians 2:19–20; Psalm 126:1bc–2ab, 2cd–3, 4–5, 6; Matthew 28:16–20.*

