THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

People of Light

O God of all nations,
who beckon us to live in the light,
you scattered the darkness through the birth of your Son, Jesus.
Prophets of old foretold that your brilliance would cover the earth
and draw all peoples into your loving care.
Grant that we, who, like the Magi,
seek the radiance of your glory
are found worthy to proclaim your holy name.
Shine brightly within our hearts
and illuminate our minds as we faithfully share the Good News.
May all peoples be drawn closer to you by the revelation of your Incarnate Word.
Keep us ever in your care,
so that, filled with joy,
we may always work to build a just and peaceful world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 7, 2018
Revealing Light

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 Feast of the Epiphany celebrates God's manifestation to all the nations. We are familiar with the story of the three wise men and the song "We Three Kings," but do we stop and think about what the Scriptures tell us today?

In the First Reading, the prophet demands that Jerusalem rise up; God has restored the city, bathing it in light. God's glory is revealed in this thriving city and its renewed people: all the "Nations shall come to your light" (v. 3). Jerusalem reveals the Good News of salvation so that the world can bask in God's redeeming love. In the Gospel, Magi from the East (representing different cultures/places) seek the Christ Child. They follow a star; they are in pursuit of truth. Upon seeing Jesus, they paid him homage. Jesus has come to save all people, and Christ's manifestation transforms the way we see one another. Christ is at the center of our relationships, and he uses our diverse gifts and experiences to reveal the Father. When the visitors from the East find Jesus, they are made part of the story of God's people.

In Baptism, bathed with the Light of Christ, we are delivered from our misfortune and made into the Body of Christ. We are no longer a people of darkness; we must shine out like Jerusalem. Our lives should reflect Christ's Divine Presence, proclaim justice to the poor, release to the captives, and attract all who seek to know truth.

THIS WEEK AT HOME

Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time is divided into two periods. The first begins with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and ends with Ash Wednesday (February 14). The second and longest period begins after Pentecost and concludes on the Saturday after the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of All the Universe. The word *ordinary* means "ordered." The season is called *Ordinary* because we number the weeks outside of festal time to help us mark the time. During Ordinary Time, the Lectionary narrates the works of Jesus and outlines what it means to be a disciple. This season is not mundane or unimportant but a season to reflect on what it means to be a faithful disciple of Christ and to practice the faith we profess. During these weeks of Winter Ordinary Time, relish the quiet of winter, listen attentively to the Scriptures, and notice the simplicity of the decor in your parish church. Allow these few weeks to be a time of contemplation and of sharing the Good News, especially as we ready ourselves for the celebration of Lent and Easter.

Monday, January 8

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Today marks the official end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Ordinary Time. Along with the wedding at Cana and the story of the Magi, this story reveals God's presence among us. Adrien Nocent, OSB, says, "The baptism of Christ, leads us even more deeply into the paschal mystery. For the baptism of Christ in the Jordan manifests the fact that salvation is now given to all: sin is destroyed" (*The Liturgical Year*, Liturgical Press, 2013). As Jesus comes up from the water, God reveals that Jesus is his beloved Son. Because of the waters of Baptism, we share in the life that Jesus promised. We have a share in the Kingdom and are required to work that all people have peace, justice, and love. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 42:1–4, 6–7 or Isaiah 55:1–11; Psalm 29:1–2, 3–4, 3, 9–10 or Isaiah 12:2–3, 4bcd, 5–6; Acts 10:34–38 or 1 John 5:1–9; Mark 1:7–11.*

Friday, February 2

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Though forty days after Christmas, this feast brings Christmas Time to mind. The liturgy for this day reminds us that Jesus is a light of revelation to the Gentiles (2:32). Simeon and Anna recognized the divine child, the King of Glory, who became like us in order to save us from our sins. This feast reminds us that Jesus is truly the light that banishes all darkness and purifies all peoples so they might share in God's goodness. At Mass today, many parishes will bless the candles used throughout the year and invite parishioners to bring candles from home to be blessed. The liturgy begins with the blessing and a candlelight procession to remind us that Jesus is our light in the darkness. *Today's Readings: Malachi 3:1–4; Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Hebrews 2:14–18; Luke 2:22–40.*

Saturday, February 10

St. Scholastica

Not much is known about Scholastica's early life: she is the twin sister of St. Benedict and the foundress of the Benedictine nuns. Hagiography tells us that Scholastica was deeply devoted to prayer and deepening her friendship with God. The readings today point out both this idea of deep love for God and the theme of service to the Lord. Though Scholastica was cloistered, her devotion to God, her brother, and her community revealed the love and mercy of God to others. Take a moment today to read her story. There's a gem that tells us of a time she outwitted Benedict. *Today's Readings (from the Memorial): Song of Songs 8:6–7; Psalm 148:1bc–2, 11–13a, 13c–14; Luke 10:38–42.*

© 2017 Liturgy Training Publications; 800-933-1800. Written by Timothy A. Johnston. Illustrated by William Hernandez. Scripture quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*: Catholic Edition, copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Permission to publish granted by the Archdiocese of Chicago, on February 23, 2017.