

Today we celebrate the Epiphany

I think this word is often misunderstood

It means manifestation or appearance

Making the glory of God visible

In Sacred Scripture, this was done in a variety of ways

The Baptism of the Lord

The Wedding at Cana, the Nativity and the visit of the Magi

All of these are manifestations or epiphanies of God's Glory

For the early Jewish people

Sacred Scripture was the basis of their expectations

Centuries before Christ arrives

Isaiah wrote of a future event

Rise up in splendor Jerusalem

Your light has come

The Glory of the Lord shines upon you

The light is the Lord himself

The star that the Magi recognize and follow

He also tells of the wealth of the nation's being brought to Jerusalem

Men from outside Judah will come

Bringing gold and frankincense

And proclaiming the praises of the Lord

In their time, the wise men fulfill these prophecies

God's restoration of Jerusalem

Promised to Isaiah; Fulfilled in Christ

Proclaimed to all by the Magi

But who are these Magi?

Where are they from?

Why are they here?

As Mary and Joseph look out their door

They see these strangers in the yard

You can imagine them asking these and more question

They are probably used to stranger's visiting

The angels and shepherds

Now these foreigners

**Not the dignitaries we might imagine God would choose to
witness these events**

Certainly not the ones we would choose

But they are the one's God chooses

They show His humility

Being born in poverty

Away from home

Not even a room at the local inn was available to him

Born in a stable

Laid in a manger

The first witnesses a bunch of society misfits

Shepherds living on the fringe of decent society

And now these foreigners

Pagans

But they show another segment of God's providence

They were most likely educated men

Astrologers who noticed something new in the heavens

Likely from Persia

But familiar with the Jewish faith

Where is this newborn King of the Jews?

We have seen his star at its rising

And have come to do him homage

The gifts they bring are not what a poor person would offer

Gold, frankincense and myrrh

This new born king is a king of all people

Jew and Gentile

Rich and poor

He will reign over all

Heaven and earth

These various epiphanies point to these and more

So what do the Magi have to say to us in 2018?

God gives every person in the world a sign of His presence

This is for unbelievers as well as believers

It goes deeper for believers

It is a sign that Christ has become man for all people

Shepherd and king

The rich and the poor

Men and women

Jew and gentile

The term Catholic means universal

We are not limited by when or where we are born

Our personal family heritage

The genetic testing of 23 and me

Spiritually it is 3 and me

As we are born into the family of the Trinity at our baptism

For believers who may be drifting along

The Magi reveals a sign

A personal sign inviting us home

Showing us the way

If we have eyes and hearts open to the truth

They teach us that we may have occasional darkness

The star disappeared from their sight for awhile

And they rejoiced in its return

However deep the darkness surrounding us

God's light is present

Even though we may not be aware

With perseverance

His light will be there to guide us to Christ's light

It may be a long journey

We don't know how long the Magi were travelling

But when Herod discovers they were not returning

He ordered the death of all boys in the area 2 years old and younger

So we can infer they had been traveling a long time

And lastly

We will be changed

No one comes to Christ and remains as they were before

The Magi encountered him

And went home by another route

Our encounter will change us

Like Herod, we may be disturbed

Our lives may be in need of a course adjustment

We may find priorities are out of line with the Truth

We may have to make some changes in our lives

A part of me may have to die

John the Baptist tells us

I must decrease so He can increase

I may have some bad habits that need to die

So virtues can grow

Are there people in my life that are not bringing me closer to Christ?

How I run my business

How I treat others

Am I living the Gospel message?

For St Paul and for us

This is a mystery to be revealed

We don't force God's hand

He does not impose upon our hearts and lives

His star is an invitation

His glory is wrapped in the flesh of a babe

His Word cloaked in silence

Adored by angels

God has given each of us gifts and talents

Gold, frankincense and myrrh

Do I grasp them for myself?

Or place them next to the manger?

For as Pope Paul VI tells us, we have an obligation:

Others may be able to be saved without hearing the Gospel

But can we be saved if we neglect to preach it?

Not in word alone, but in every choice and action every day