

Lesson 13: Epiphany

Please click twice to watch the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vzYYJK1_pg

The Christmas season is a season of celebration. The Church celebrates many important feasts during this time. Epiphany is one of the many important feasts during the Christmas season. The word *epiphany* comes from the Greek *Epiphania*, meaning “revelation.”

At Epiphany, the Church celebrates the manifestation of the Son of God as the Savior and Messiah. On Epiphany, we recall the visit of the Magi to the newborn Jesus: *“And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”* (Matthew 2:9–12)

The epiphany, or showing, of Jesus teaches us that Jesus’ coming into the world was important to the whole world and that the Good News of Jesus Christ is meant for everyone!

Who were the three kings? Their story is shrouded in legend and tradition but it is believed that they were skilled at watching the stars. They knew about the many prophecies that spoke of the Messiah and when they saw the bright star they knew something special was about to happen – that the Messiah had finally arrived.

The Magi traveled for a long time – roughly three years. Their first stop was to visit King Herod in Jerusalem because they thought that the King of the Jews would be born in a palace. *“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”* (Matthew 2:2)

Herod was furious because he did not know that Jesus’ kingdom would be a heavenly one and he thought that his power was in danger. The chief priests and scribes of Jerusalem told Herod what the scriptures had said: *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 Israel.* (Matthew 2:6)

King Herod then secretly met with the Magi and asked them exactly when the star appeared. He then told them that they could find the King of the Jews in Bethlehem. He told them: *“Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”* (Matthew 2:8)

The Magi set out for Bethlehem and eventually they came to the house where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were staying. They gave Jesus the gifts they brought for him – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

- Gold because Jesus is king.
- Frankincense because Jesus is God.
- Myrrh because Jesus would one day die upon the cross to save us from our sins. Myrrh was used to embalm the dead.

As they prepared to leave Bethlehem and return home, God warned them in a dream to avoid Herod and so they took a different way home.

Herod was furious when he found out that the Magi tricked him. Because he still felt threatened by this newborn King of the Jews, he ordered the killing of every baby boy from birth to three years old. God warned Joseph in a dream that they should flee to Egypt and so Joseph and Mary escaped to Egypt and Jesus' life was spared.

The Epiphany should remind us of how special Jesus is and that we should spend our lives seeking Him. Jesus is the light for everyone and if we follow him we will never go astray.

