

January 8th, 2010 CELEBRATION OF EPIPHANY

Introduction to the Day

Epiphany means “manifestation.” On this day we celebrate the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles—that is, to all nations. Some Christian traditions celebrate three great epiphanies on this day: the magi’s adoration of the Christ child, Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle, in which he changes water into wine. The word and sacraments are for us the great epiphany of God’s grace and mercy. We go forth to witness to the light that shines brightly in our midst.

After a moment of silent meditation to prepare ourselves for worship, we will begin the liturgy.

Prayers of the People

Let us bring our prayers for the church, all creation, and the needs of the world before God.

A brief silence.

Gracious God, reveal the rich variety of your wisdom and draw all those estranged from you into your church. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Turn our hearts away from careless consumption of the earth's resources, and teach us how to create and sustain healthy communities. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give to world rulers a heart for justice, so that they might defend the cause of the poor and oppose all oppression and violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Deliver those in need: the falsely accused and imprisoned; the homeless; those suffering from addictions and chronic conditions, and all the sick. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Teach us to welcome the stranger and outsider into our midst, so they might share in the promise of Jesus Christ. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We offer thanks for the saints who praised your Son with their lives. May we, like them, be filled with joy when we come into his presence in this life and the next. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in your glory revealed to the world, we offer these and all our prayers to you, O God of our salvation, through Christ our light.

Amen.

Lector: Please read the introduction, then the citation (i.e. "The First Reading is from the.... chapter of ..." - then read the text.)

First Reading – *Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her, because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.*

Isaiah 60:1–6

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 72:1–7, 10–14

Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
**that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**

that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

**Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

**Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace
till the moon shall be no more.

**May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.**

May all kings bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service.

**For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,
the oppressed, and those who have no helper.**

He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.

**From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

Second Reading - *What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.*

Ephesians 3:1–12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to

humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

*** Gospel Reading** - *God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.*

Matthew 2:1–12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.