

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

After the Lord was baptised, the heavens
were opened,
and the Spirit descended upon him like a
dove,
and the voice of the Father thundered:
This is my beloved Son, with whom I am
well pleased.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
who, when Christ had been baptised in the
River Jordan
and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!
Buy corn without money, and eat,
and, at no cost, wine and milk.
Why spend money on what is not bread,
your wages on what fails to satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and you will have good
things to eat
and rich food to enjoy.
Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.

With you I will make an everlasting
covenant
out of the favours promised to David.
See, I have made of you a witness to the
peoples,
a leader and master of the nations.
See, you will summon a nation you never
knew,
those unknown will come hurrying to you,
for the sake of the Lord your God,
of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you.

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked man abandon his way,
the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn back to the Lord who will take
pity on him,

To our God who is rich in forgiving;
for my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who
speaks.

Yes, the heavens are as high above earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.

Yes, as the rain and the snow come down
from the heavens and do not return without
watering the earth, making it yield and giving
growth to provide seed for the sower and
bread for the eating, so the word that goes
from my mouth does not return to me empty,
without carrying out my will and succeeding
in what it was sent to do.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 12

Response:

**With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**

1. Truly, God is my salvation.
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my son,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
From the wells of salvation. (R.)
2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his
name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the
peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. (R.)
3. Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of
Israel. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 John 5:1-9

A reading from the First Letter of St John.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ
has been begotten by God;
and whoever loves the Father that begot him
loves the child whom he begets.
We can be sure that we love God's children
if we love God himself and do what he has
commanded us;
this is what loving God is –
keeping his commandments;
and his commandments are not difficult,
because anyone who has been begotten by
God
has already overcome the world;
this is the victory over the world –
our faith.

Who can overcome the world?
Only the man who believes that Jesus is the
Son of God:
Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,
not with water only,
but with water and blood;
with the Spirit as another witness –
since the Spirit is the truth –
so that there are three witnesses,
the Spirit, the water and the blood,
and all three of them agree.
We accept the testimony of human witnesses,
but God's testimony is much greater,
and this is God's testimony,
given as evidence for his Son.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

John saw Jesus coming towards him, and
said:

**This is the Lamb of God who takes away the
sin of the world.**

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 1:7-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

In the course of his preaching John the
Baptist said, "Someone is following me,
someone who is more powerful than I am,
and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the
strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with
water, but he will baptise you with the Holy
Spirit."

It was at this time that Jesus came from
Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in
the Jordan by John. No sooner had he
come up out of the water than he saw the
heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove
descending on him. And a voice came from
heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my
favour rests on you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next three lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the offerings
we have brought to honour the revealing of
your beloved Son,
so that the oblation of your faithful
may be transformed into the sacrifice of him
who willed in his compassion
to wash away the sins of the world.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Behold the One of whom John said:
I have seen and testified that this is the Son
of God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished with these sacred gifts,
we humbly entreat your mercy, O Lord,
that, faithfully listening to your Only Begotten
Son,
we may be your children in name and in truth.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FOLLOW THAT STAR!



The Gospel message is for everyone. This is the point which Matthew is making in the colourful episode of the Visit of the Magi. They are Gentiles, they do not belong to the Jewish people, and they foreshadow the Gentiles who are open to Jesus later in the story.

They are brought to Jerusalem by their scientific observations, but need the Jewish scriptures to fulfil their quest. Herod reminds us of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, who saw in the growth of the Hebrew people a threat to his throne and the stability of his country, and Herod will adopt similarly extreme measures to deal with this perceived threat. Throughout the two chapters which comprise the Infancy Narrative of Matthew, God communicates with the main character, Joseph, through dreams, and here the infant Jesus is saved from Herod by another such divine intervention with the Magi. Bethlehem is the town traditionally associated with King David, and the priests quote the prophet Micah as identifying it as the place from which the Christ, the Messiah will come. All of these references to the Old Testament underline that God's plan for human beings is being realised in the person of Jesus. The symbolic gifts announce themes which Matthew will develop in the body of his gospel: Jesus' kingship (gold), his divinity as the Son of God (incense), his redeeming death on the cross and burial (myrrh).. ■

LEARN

The word *epiphany* means showing.

The Church recognizes three events as epiphany: the showing of the child Jesus to the Magi, the baptism of Jesus, and the first sign at Cana, the changing of water into wine.

There is no number given to the magi in the text of Matthew.

The figures of the *three kings* are derived from the three gifts and the text of Psalm 71 (72), which portrays the kings of the earth bringing gifts and paying homage to the Lord.

DO

Look at the figures of the magi in the crib. Who are the people searching for Christ in your area? What could you suggest that your parish might do to help them?



SAY

Lord, guide us with your light.

REFLECT

Artistic scenes of the Visit of the Magi can help us understand the point Matthew is making. Very often the three figures will comprise a European/Caucasian, an Asian and an African personage. This expresses in visual form the universality of the gospel message, that the only requirement in order to be accepted is desire and an open mind. The word *catholic* means *universal*, and in some ways this is the feast which we should celebrate in a special way as the revelation of God's love for all people. Thanks to the dramatic increase in the movement of people round the world, many Sunday congregations now comprise members from different countries and cultures, so we are much more accustomed to actually seeing for ourselves that the Gospel has reached most regions of the world.

But people are still searching for answers to the deepest questions in human life. No-one comes to believe until they are ready. There is no ready-made answer, and often the honest person has to struggle, has to make a long journey before things fall into place, if in fact they ever do. Others may come to believe and want to join the community, but find for one reason or another they are not welcome. Perhaps we need to think in a broader way about the Feast of the Epiphany: if we no longer think along lines of race and culture, should we be thinking in other ways, about the different types of people in our world, our country today? This feast might also remind us that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and no race, religion or any other factor has a monopoly on that. ■