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Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (A) — White

January 8, 2023

One of the notable and distinctively Filipino symbols of Christmas is the *parol*. We see them hanging in many Filipino homes. We see them embellishing our streets and our shopping malls. The *parol* (from the Spanish *farol*, a lantern, or a burning light with cover) is, of course, a symbol for the “star of Bethlehem” that settled right above the place of Jesus’ birth and guided the Magi to that same place. That is what is described in today’s Gospel on this Solemnity of the Epiphany.

The Magi (*magoi* in Greek), probably “astrologers” or even priests of the Zoroastrian religion, play a prominent role in the Gospel. Many speculations have been advanced as to who and how many they were. The story itself is silent on these matters. Matthew simply tells us that they were travelers “from the east.” They were seekers or searchers (“Where is the newborn king of the Jews?”). They were also worshippers (“We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage”). One may ask: How did they find what they were seeking and eventually pay him homage? In two ways: first, by looking up; and second, by following the star.

Look Up!

In his homily on the Solemnity of the Epiphany five years ago, Pope Francis pointed out that the Magi saw the star because their eyes gazed towards heaven. They looked up and saw the star that eventually led them to the Christ-child in a manger. Pope Francis further remarked, “I wonder if we still know how to look up at the sky. Do we know how to dream, to long for God, to expect the newness He brings, or do we let ourselves be swept along by

LOOK UP!

Fr. Victor S. Nicdao



life, like dry branches before the wind? The Magi were not content with just getting by, with keeping afloat. They understood that to truly live, we need a lofty goal, and we need to keep looking up” (Jan 6, 2018). Indeed, we need to look up. We should not just focus obsessively on the things of this world and, consequently, forget the things of heaven.

Focusing on the things of this world is not necessarily bad. People need to earn their living. They work in order to be able to build their homes, send their children to school, and provide for the material needs of their families. They need rest and recreation from time to time. What is bad is when these become their obsession in life. There is a need to consider, too, the things of heaven. People need to raise their eyes to heaven, to pray and thank the Lord for his countless blessings. They need to dream for a better world and act in a manner that promotes the welfare of other people. The problem today is that fewer and fewer people raise their eyes to

heaven. They fail to look up. To look up is not just one of the many poses we do for a group picture. To look up is to be mindful of the things of heaven, the things beyond this world that truly matter.

Follow the Star!

In the Gospel, the Magi from the East eventually find the Christ-child in a manger by following the star. They do not follow the desire of Herod and, consequently, they do not return to him. Herod and the star of Bethlehem signify two contrasting symbols. The star has directed the Magi to the life of a newborn child. Herod threatens this very life. The radiant star of Bethlehem represents what is glorious and noble in life. In contrast, the duplicitous Herod stands for what is perverse and vicious.

The challenge is not to return to Herod. Let us not go back to a life of perversity and vice. Let us turn our back on wicked activities. Let us overcome evil ways and habits. Let us avoid bad behavior and conduct. Instead, let us lead lives that are holy, righteous and blameless before the Lord. Let us always give our best, do our best, and be our best.

Epiphany is a celebration, not of God who is simply “watching us from a distance” as the famed Bette Midler song goes, but of One who is Emmanuel, who refuses to be isolated, to be distant from us. It celebrates a God who offers himself to all. That is what the coming of the Magi means. The Magi represent the universality of God’s offer of salvation. Salvation is offered not just to the Jews but to everybody. And this offer of salvation is available to anyone who, like the Magi, cares and dares to look up and follow the star.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Mal 3:1; 1 Chr 29:12)

(Recited when there is no opening song)

Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here)

P—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly)

P—Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of our Lord. “Epiphany” means manifestation. The birth of Jesus is meant not only for the people of Israel but also for all nations, represented by the Magi or the “Three Kings.” May this revelation shine forth on everyone so that the power of salvation may be shared by all.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

Gloria

All—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

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who on this day revealed your Only Begotten Son to the nations by the guidance of a star, grant in your mercy, that we, who know you already by faith, may be brought to behold the beauty of your sublime glory.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Is 60:1–6) *(Sit)*

The prophet Isaiah foresees the day when God will be worshipped, not only by the Israelites whom he will gather from dispersion, but also by pagan nations.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

RISE UP in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they

all gather and come to you: your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of the nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord.

— The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 72)

R—Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Sr. M.C.A. Parco, fsp

Lord, e - very na - tion on
earth will a - dore... you.

1. O God, with your judgment endow the king,/ and with your justice, the king's son;/ he shall govern your people with justice/ and your afflicted ones with judgment. **(R)**

2. Justice shall flower in his days,/ and profound peace, till the moon be no more./ May he rule from sea to sea,/ and from the River to the ends of the earth. **(R)**

3. The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;/ the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute./ All kings shall pay him homage,/ all nations shall serve him. **(R)**

4. For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,/ and the afflicted when he has no one to help him./ He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;/ the lives of the poor he shall save. **(R)**

Second Reading (Eph 3:2–3a, 5–6)

The apostle Paul declares that in Christ Jesus, the loving plan of the Father is now revealed: the Gentiles become sharers with the Jews in the gift of salvation.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and co-partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

— The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Mt 2:2) (*Stand*)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 2:1–12)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

WHEN Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: *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." Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

— The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow.*) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of

the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Sisters and brothers, today, we see the star at its rising. Let us pay homage to him as we ask the Father to hear our plea on this day of the Lord's Epiphany. For every petition we say:

R—Father, guide us by your Light.

C—For the Church: Guide the hearts of Pope Francis, bishops, priests, deacons, and the lay faithful, as they strive to listen to and journey with the communities they serve and the persons they encounter. We pray: **(R)**

C—For all public servants: Guide their hearts as they strive to choose, always and everywhere, the common good. We pray: **(R)**

C—For all of us who are gathered today: Shine your Light upon our hearts. Make them always open and sensitive to the movements of your Spirit so that we may reflect your Light to one another. We pray: **(R)**

C—For our departed loved ones: May they enjoy the warmth and light of your eternal presence. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P—Guide us by your Light, O Father, that we may also shine

your light to all people of good will and all of your creation.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All—Amen.

**LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST**



Presentation of the Gifts

(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Look with favor, Lord, we pray, on these gifts of your Church, in which are offered now not gold or frankincense or myrrh, but he who by them is proclaimed, sacrificed and received, Jesus Christ.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

Preface of the Epiphany of the Lord

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For today you have revealed the mystery of our salvation in Christ as a light for the nations, and, when he appeared in our mortal nature, you made us new by the glory of his immortal nature.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy... *(Kneel)*

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we



JOURNEYS OF FAITH *SETTING THE GOLD STANDARD
IN PILGRIMAGES*

PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULES

TURKEY TREASURES (Apr 9 - 18, 2023)

with Fr. Phil Estrella, OMI
with optional extension to Israel

FOLLOWING THE GOSPEL TRAIL (Apr 9 - 23, 2023)

Israel & Turkey with Fr. Dennis Soriano

JOURNEYS TO THE LAND OF THE BIBLE (Apr 18 - May 1, 2023)

Egypt-Israel-Jordan with Fr. Jigs Rosalinda

ADRIATIC COAST WITH MEDJUGORJE (Apr 22 - May 5, 2023)

Austria - Slovenia - Bosnia Hercegovina - Croatia - Montenegro
with Fr. Herbie Santos

JOURNEYING TO EUROPE'S MARIAN SHRINES (May 6 - 23, 2023)

Portugal - Spain - France - Switzerland - Italy
with Fr. Bong Tupino

CONTACT US FOR FULL DETAILS AND SCHEDULES.

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**proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God...

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Mt 2:2)

We have seen his star in the east, and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Go before us with heavenly light, O Lord, always and everywhere, that we may perceive with clear sight and revere with true affection the mystery in which you have willed us to participate.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P— Bow down for the blessing.

(Pause)

May God, who has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light, pour out in kindness his blessing upon you and make your hearts firm in faith, hope and charity.

All—Amen.

P—And since in all confidence you follow Christ, who today appeared in the world as a light shining in darkness, may God make you, too, a light for your brothers and sisters.

All—Amen.

P—And so when your pilgrimage is ended, may you come to him whom the Magi sought as they followed the star and whom they found with great joy, the Light from Light, who is Christ the Lord.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son (†), and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Go forth, the Mass is ended.

All—Thanks be to God.