

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Radiant Light

God our guiding light,
you illuminated the long path to our
Lord for the Magi.
Like the travelers,
we are overjoyed by your radiant
presence made known to us.
Though darkness blankets the world,
your glory shines upon us.
May we gather,
walk by your light,
and pay homage to you all the days
of our lives.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 5, 2025

Treasures for the Lord



Today's readings: Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12. The Magi travel to pay homage to the Holy Family after Jesus is born, a fulfillment of the prophecy we hear in the first reading. Isaiah urges Jerusalem to “rise up in splendor,” for the light has come. He tells of people who journey a long distance, “bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord.” The Magi do just this and bring three gifts to honor baby Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. There is much symbolism in these gifts: gold identifies Jesus as a king; frankincense, used as incense for offerings, symbolizes prayer; myrrh, used in healing and embalming, foreshadows Jesus’ death.

Though it may feel like Christmas is over as the world has moved on from celebrating the holiday season, the Church celebrates Christmas until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (this year, that is next Sunday, January 12). In the spirit of Christmas, reflect on what treasures you possess to give to the Lord, on what gifts you can offer to your community and the Church. After your prayerful reflection, offer a gift to someone this week. A person in your community might appreciate the gift of quality time; an agency might welcome your volunteer hours; children in your family would appreciate the gift of faith through faith-sharing on the Epiphany; and organizations that serve families appreciate monetary gifts.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 6

Consolation and Desolation

“Do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God,” warns John the apostle. Indeed, it is critical to discern God’s will. St. Ignatius of Loyola writes about the states of consolation (joy, peace, being settled) and desolation (fear, anxiety, being unsettled) in prayerful decision-making. Per St. John’s encouragement to deepen our spiritual awareness, take time today to learn about Ignatian discernment. Consider how you can practice prayerful discernment. *Today’s readings: 1 John 3:22–4:6; Psalm 2:7bc–8, 10–12a; Matthew 4:12–17, 23–25.*

Tuesday, January 7

Abundance

Jesus takes five loaves and two fish to feed the vast crowd gathered to hear him preach. The disciples are skeptical as Jesus turns a small amount of food into an abundance that feeds five thousand people. Invite your family to reflect on the abundance with which God has blessed you. Gather at the end of the day and say a prayer of gratitude, naming some of those blessings. *Today’s readings: 1 John 4:7–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4, 7–8; Mark 6:34–44.*

Wednesday, January 8

Take Courage

In today’s Gospel, Jesus walks on water during a storm to reach the disciples. They are terrified, but Jesus says to them: “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” The wind dies down and the disciples are astounded. Their hearts are hardened, as they cannot comprehend Jesus’ self-revelation as the Son of God. Find a church in your area that offers Eucharistic adoration. When you go to pray, consider how you can keep your heart from hardening. How can you surrender your fears? *Today’s readings: 1 John 4:11–18; Psalm 72:1–2, 10, 12–13; Mark 6:45–52.*

Thursday, January 9

Liberty

Highlighting Jesus’ mission of liberation, the Gospel proclaims that he will especially serve the marginalized and forgotten, bringing “glad tidings to the poor.” From the first reading, we hear that “God is love.” Further, “We love because he first loved us.” Set time aside this week to serve someone who is afflicted or oppressed. While you serve, pray with John the apostle’s words: whoever does not love another “whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” *Today’s readings: 1 John 4:19–5:4; Psalm 72:1–2, 14 and 15bc, 17; Luke 4:14–22a.*

Friday, January 10

Withdraw to Pray

Jesus cleanses a leper and, while word of his ministry spreads and crowds gather to listen to him, he withdraws “to deserted places to pray.” Amid his healing and preaching, Jesus models the importance of cultivating a prayer life. Spend time creating a prayer space in your home. This should be a space to which you can withdraw, like Jesus. Set time aside to pray in this space at least once every week. *Today’s readings: 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Luke 5:12–16.*

Saturday, January 11

Idols

Take John the Baptist’s words to heart: “He must increase; I must decrease.” To do so, “be on your guard against idols,” as the first reading states, and consider what takes you away from God. Before going to sleep tonight, prayerfully review your day. How did you give glory to God? What “idols” distracted you from doing so? *Today’s readings: 1 John 5:14–21; Psalm 149:1–2, 3–4, 5, 6a and 9b; John 3:22–30.*

