



**BIBLE FAITH SHARING JANUARY 4, 2022**

**The Epiphany Of The Lord (CA)**

**First Reading, Isaiah 60:1-6**

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 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.



**Reflection:**

*This reading reveals the rebuilding of Jerusalem after years living in the darkness and enslavement of exile in Babylon. It's a great reminder that God is with us, even in the darkest of times of our life. There were times the people of Jerusalem felt abandoned by God. Their moment had now come, their release from captivity and return to their homeland Jerusalem. It's a time of great hope, renewed spirit and rejoicing. However, their happiness will come with a price involving a change in the way they live and serve the Lord. The renewing of Jerusalem will not be for the people of Judea only, but a renewing of life for all nations and all peoples. We too must recognize that our life and everything we have is a gift from God and God's gifts are never meant to be kept for ourselves only, but to be shared with others.*

**Questions:**

1. Any words in the reading get your attention? Any feelings? Thoughts? Images? Questions?
2. Share about your experience being locked up in captivity. What is most difficult for you?
3. Share about what its like or would be like getting released. Would this be a joyful time for you? Why or why not?
4. What are the challenges will you be faced with after getting out and returning home?

**Responsorial Psalm 72:1-2,7-8,10-13 (11)**

**R. (cf. 11) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

## Second Reading, Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

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 coheirs, members of the same body, and partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

### Reflection:

*We are one family or "members of the same body" in the eyes of God. This reading refers to us as all "members of the same body." Just like our physical body, we need all of our parts in order to fully function. The people written about in the Old Testament thought they were the only ones chosen by God. Today, some Christians believe they are "saved" and other believers are not. God's Holy Spirit is a Spirit of unity and salvation offered to all peoples of every faith, revealed to us through Christ Jesus. God's mercy and grace is much bigger than our religious beliefs. As difficult as it may be for some, we must see one another as God sees us, his children whom he loves, regardless of our religious beliefs and our human interpretations of the Bible. We are called to accept one another as God accepts us.*

### Questions:

1. Any words in the reading get your attention? Any feelings? Thoughts? Images? Questions?
2. Share about a time you were not accepted by someone or some group. What did it feel like?
3. After hearing this reading from Paul, what is it God expects from you and I as members of his body (the church)? As Christians, how should we be accepting of others?
4. If God's Holy Spirit is a Spirit of unity, why are so many people divided? What can you and I do to help people see one another as part of the one body of Christ?

## Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12

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 Judah, 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.



### Reflection:

*The word "Epiphany" means a revealing of something. The three wise men were seekers of the truth and they were willing to go a great distance to find it, which they did in Jesus (John 14:6). But like all the times we seek what is good, there is something or someone that tries to influence us away from that good. This is what King Herod tried to do with the wise men, but because they were looking for the truth, they went God's way instead. The wise men were foreigners, all three from different countries, beliefs, and cultures, yet they believed and all came to Jesus on their knees bearing gifts. We too are called to be seekers of the truth, on our knees, bearing the gift of our love and service before our Lord.*

### Questions:

1. Any words in the reading get your attention? Any feelings? Thoughts? Images? Questions?
2. What is the difference between King Herod and the three Kings (Magi) reason for seeking Jesus?
3. The Magi traveled a great distance into the unknown looking for Jesus and the truth he was about. How far would you go to find truth in your life?
5. Herod tried to influence the Magi for his own selfish intentions. What are the influences in your life that try to steer you away from truth and goodness?
6. Like the Magi, how might God be calling you to head down better roads in life?