

EPIPHANY (A,B,C)

THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAS RISEN UPON YOU

Did you receive some gifts during Christmas? Did you also give gifts to some people? What did you give to the Infant Jesus?

Epiphany means 'manifestation' or 'appearance'. This feast is about the revelation to the Gentiles that the Saviour has come for all peoples. The former idea about the coming of the Messiah was that He would come for the Jews. "A star shall advance from Jacob, and a staff shall rise from Israel, that shall smite the brows of Moab," (Nm. 24:17). This was the oracle of Balaam.

Israel in exile was told to arise and shine for her light had come and the glory of the Lord had risen upon her. The prophet continued to tell her what would happen at that time, "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall walk by your light, and kings in the brightness of your rising". There was a promise of prosperity and joy.

Today, we hear Wise Men from the East have come to see the newborn King, because they saw His star, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him." The Magi were considered astrologers, (but not as we know them today). They were Gentiles walking by the light of the newborn King.

The prophecy is fulfilled; 'the glory of the Lord has risen upon you, and nations shall walk by your light.' These wise men were Gentiles not Jews, so St. Paul tells us that it has now been revealed that Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

The Magi went to Jerusalem to worship the new-born King. They did not go with empty hands, but with something they could offer: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These items have their significant meanings;

gold - king, frankincense - priest, and myrrh - incorruptibility of the body of Christ. It is also a way of telling us that Christ came for all peoples, the rich and the poor alike. The first message from the angel was delivered to shepherds who were considered poor and uncouth.

You and I are now fellow heirs, and members of the same body. This means that the glory of the Lord has risen upon us and so we should arise and shine. We are reminded of the famous passage, "you are the light of the world and salt of the earth;" (Mt. 5:13-14). How does this apply to you and me? What is your light like? Is it blue, red, green, or white? If the star was not bright the Wise Men couldn't have seen the way to where Jesus was. Christians of today have not put a bushel basket on the light but coloured it so people see wrong things as if they are real. Instead of nations or peoples walking by our light we are making them stumble every day. We deceive them like Herod who pretended to have good intention to worship the Infant Jesus.

Do you believe that the glory of the Lord has risen upon you too? What do you offer God for the glory shone on you? Christ does not need gold, frankincense, and myrrh now. Paul tells us what to do, "I urge you, therefore, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect", (Rom. 12:1-2). Jesus told the woman at the well, "the hour is coming - indeed is already here - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshiper the Father seeks," (Jn. 4:23-24).

Is your life a star that points to Jesus, or yourself? John the Baptist, like the star, pointed to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," (Jn.1:29). Are we stars to our family and friends? Are we walking in the light of Christ or still in darkness?