

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord – 01-04-2026

“See darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples.”

At the time the prophet Isaiah wrote this Jerusalem was in ruins and the Israelites were living in Babylonian exile? I’m sure for them it seemed that things couldn’t have gotten any darker than they were.

And yet Isaiah wasn’t writing about this time of exile at all. Instead he was referring to the darkness that would set upon the hearts of many Israelites at the coming of the Messiah.

According to the gospel today, “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 of Jerusalem with him.”

No one epitomizes the darkness more than Herod. He was the reigning King of Jews at the time and all he saw in this newborn king was a threat to his own reign.

Yet it was for Herod and his people that Jesus came. He is the long awaited Messiah. Jesus had no desire to take away Herod's kingdom. The only place Jesus wanted to reign was in Herod's heart and in the hearts of all of his people.

Jesus is not a threat to anyone. "Upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance."

Now compare King Herod to the three kings, the magi, who following the light of a star went to King Herod to inquire about the newborn king. Herod pointed them toward Bethlehem but it was the light of the star that led them to the infant king lying in a manger.

They looked for the king in a palace surrounded by servants but found him in a stable surrounded by animals.

And despite the unexpected end to their journey their faith was not shaken. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

And allowing themselves to be further guided by the Lord, they learned in a dream of Herod's evil plot to kill the baby so they returned to their countries by another route.

They allowed themselves to be completely guided by the Lord in spite of all the unusual twists and turns they had encountered in their journey.

We too will encounter plenty of twists and turns in our journey through life.

Today the Church sets before us the example of the humble magi who went to a palace in search of a King and found him lying in a manger in a cold stable barely fit for beasts.

God allows himself to be found in the simplest places and in the most common ways. Provided we aren't obstinate toward Church teaching and unrepentant sin doesn't reign in our hearts this is exactly where we will find him – in the ordinary circumstances of daily life.

Most of us will best serve him by walking humbly in the ways of the Church right here at home making our church a more faithful Catholic community.

Today, especially as we approach the King of kings hidden not as a little baby in a manger but in the form of bread and wine, let's imitate the humility of the three kings and interiorly prostrate ourselves offering him the only gift he wants – to reign in the stable of our heart.