

# Daily Prayer

## *The Epiphany of the Lord*

*Wednesday, January 6, 2021*

*We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys.—and celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord.*

*We begin by saying*

We have seen his star in the East,  
and have come to worship him.

*Matthew 2.2*

## **The First Reading**

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.  
Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.  
Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.  
Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

*Isaiah 60.1-6*

## **The Psalm**

Give the king your judgements, O God, ♦  
and your righteousness to the son of a king.  
Then shall he judge your people righteously ♦  
and your poor with justice.  
May the mountains bring forth peace, ♦  
and the little hills righteousness for the people.  
May he defend the poor among the people, ♦  
deliver the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.  
May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, ♦  
from one generation to another.  
May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, ♦  
like the showers that water the earth.  
In his time shall righteousness flourish, ♦  
and abundance of peace  
till the moon shall be no more.  
May his dominion extend from sea to sea ♦  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.  
May his foes kneel before him ♦  
and his enemies lick the dust.  
The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute; ♦  
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts.

All kings shall fall down before him; ♦  
all nations shall do him service.

For he shall deliver the poor that cry out, ♦  
the needy and those who have no helper.

He shall have pity on the weak and poor; ♦  
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.

He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, ♦  
and dear shall their blood be in his sight.

*Psalm 72.1-14*

## **The Gospel Reading**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and

there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*Matthew 2.1-12*

*We continue with the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?*

## **The Reflection**

*The Magi The Foreigners Arrive*

*Jim Boyles*

Imagine for a moment that you are the writer, Matthew, sitting down to tell the story of Jesus. You have so many pieces of information - firsthand accounts, fragments of stories and sayings, parts of sermons, stories of healings, so much to choose from. You want to piece together a story that will present Jesus favourably, forcefully, and will draw the curious into the faith community.

Mark and John began their gospels without any reference to the birth stories. But Matthew, starting off with Jesus' genealogy, gets right to the point, "Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way." He tells the story of the birth, involving the angels, and Mary and Joseph, and provides the context—it happens in Bethlehem during King Herod's reign. Matthew's off to a good start on his biography. Next comes the visit of the magi, the wise men, foreigners from the east. Matthew doesn't mention the number, but the tradition is firmly set that there were three, each bearing one of the three gifts.

I think that Matthew's decision to include this bit of the story is quite significant. He easily could have decided to leave it out. Wasn't this all about the Messiah coming to save the community of Israel, God's chosen ones? Here it is though, foreigners from far away, coming to honour this baby, bringing gold and frankincense and myrrh. I think Matthew is making a very significant point here, that God's love is available and shared with all people, not just the 'inside group'.

We're hearing these days of white supremacists, fringe groups that believe that white people are superior, and need to dominate over others. It's a frightening strand in our society. The visit of the magi to Bethlehem challenge so profoundly this belief. Matthew didn't tell the story of the shepherds visiting the manger, but highlights the visit of these foreigners. Matthew wants to shape his story so that others will see very early on that God's care is for all people, the chosen ones of Israel, but also the strangers from the east who have been guided by a star. God communicates in different ways to different people

I'm glad that the Church of the Redeemer has a Refugee Committee. We have so much to learn from those who come to us from a distance, bearing gifts as rich as gold and frankincense and myrrh. We must not simply challenge all forms of racism and white supremacy in our midst, but we must make strong efforts to welcome the stranger, listen and learn from them, and broaden our understanding of the family of God to its furthest limits—all of humanity.

Including this episode early in the gospel relates to the last verse in the gospel, where Jesus tells the disciples to go out into all the world to share the good news. We invite the world in, and we go out to the world as well. It's a perspective that's needed in these days of

ultra nationalism, specially in a climate of fear and suspicion of the 'other'. That perspective is the good news we are called to live and to share.

*When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle*

## **The Canticle ~ A Song of the Covenant**

Thus says God, who created the heavens, ♦  
who fashioned the earth and all that dwells in it;  
Who gives breath to the people upon it ♦  
and spirit to those who walk in it,  
'I am the Lord and I have called you in righteousness, ♦  
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
'I have given you as a covenant to the people, ♦  
a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,  
'To bring out the captives from the dungeon, ♦  
from the prison, those who sit in darkness.  
'I am the Lord, that is my name; ♦  
my glory I give to no other.'

*Isaiah 42.5-8a*

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions) and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

## **The Intercessions**

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.  
You sent your Child to bring good news to the poor,  
sight to the blind,  
freedom to the captives  
and salvation to your people:  
anoint us with your Spirit;

rouse us to work in his name.

By your Spirit

**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to bring help to the poor  
and freedom to the oppressed.

By your Spirit

**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to tell the world  
the good news of your healing love.

By your Spirit

**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to those who mourn,  
to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.

By your Spirit

**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to proclaim that the time is here  
for you to save your people.

By your Spirit

**bring in your kingdom.**

Use us, unworthy as we are,  
to bring in your kingdom of mercy, justice, love and peace.  
Empower us by your Spirit and unite us in your Child,  
that all our joy and delight may be to serve you,  
now and for ever.

**Amen.**

*Our prayers conclude*

Eternal God,  
who by a star  
led wise men to the worship of your Son,  
guide by your light the nations of the earth,  
that the whole world may know your glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen

*We conclude*

Christ the Son of God perfect in me the image of his glory  
and gladden my heart with the good news of his kingdom.

Credits:

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