



# Christ in Our Neighborhood

## Prayer

Loving Father,  
in this season of Christmas, may we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As the Magi offered gifts to the Christ Child, may we give You our hearts of faith, hope, and love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

## Commentary

### 1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

If Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ, the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates WHAT His birth means for us. Our First Reading gives us a hint at what this season means.

We read from Isaiah that God promises to shine His glory upon Israel. Of course, this is fulfilled at Christmas with the star over Bethlehem. More importantly, the promise of nations walking by the light that shines forth from Israel is fulfilled in the reading of our Gospel with the Magi from the East who find the King of kings under the star.

In Christ, there is a New Jerusalem where all people and nations are gathered. This will be realized in a more profound way at our celebrations of Easter and Pentecost where we speak of a Heavenly Jerusalem. But, for now, we sing with Isaiah: "Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you."

As Christians, we are members of the New Jerusalem, a beacon of light and hope for those who live in darkness.

## Questions

As part of the Heavenly Jerusalem, do you see yourself as light of the world for others?

## Commentary

### 2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

The WHAT of Christmas celebrated in this Feast of Epiphany is also answered in our 2nd Reading. The birth of Christ is not only for the people of Israel. While he is born of David's line, he is not only the king of the Jews. He is King of the world.

## Epiphany of the Lord

St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians spells this point out clearly. He says, "The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

Jews and Gentiles, following Christ Jesus, are coheirs in the new and Heavenly Jerusalem. The Promise of Isaiah is for all

who follow the Prince of Peace, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

## Question

What does it mean for you to be a coheir with Christ in the Heavenly Kingdom (the New Jerusalem)?

Shortly, we will be looking to the Season of Lent. As a beacon of light and hope, reach out to those who may be in the dark and invite them to participate in the six-week Lenten series on Christ in Our Neighborhood.



If you would like to lead a group, visit [dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood](http://dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood) for free resources and a leader's guide.

## Commentary

### Gospel: Matthew 2:1-2

The Church in the West (Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, etc.) celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany within the Christmas Season (on January 6 or the Sunday following).

In the East (Orthodox Church) Epiphany is the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord -- also landing on January 6.

The Catholic Church recognizes Epiphany to mean the journey of the Magi who followed the star to Bethlehem. (Catholics also celebrate the Baptism of the Lord after the Feast of the Magi).

Epiphany means, "manifestation or insight." For Christians, the Feast of Epiphany means "the manifestation of Christ." For the Eastern Church, the Baptism of the Lord recognizes the vision or revelation of God through the parted clouds, in the form of a dove who rests upon Christ. For the Western Church, the manifestation of Christ is a slow journey that takes time. This is best celebrated in the Church on this Feast of the Three Kings whose journey leads them to Christ.

As we read in the Gospel of Matthew, the description of the journey and the question of discerning who the Christ child may be is longer than the actual time the Wise Men spend with "the child and Mary his mother."

### Question

Is your discovery of Christ a one-time event or a lifelong journey?

### This Week's Task

What is a journey without a journal?

As you journey with Christ this year, you may want to begin a journal. Write down a few notes about your prayer experiences, your insights from Mass, or personal reflections from Scripture.

## Group Prayer

The group sings or says the following:

What child is this who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch are keeping?

*Refrain:*

This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
come, peasant, king, to own him;  
the King of kings salvation brings,  
let loving hearts enthrone him.  
(Refrain)

The Prayer continues with Psalm 72

### Psalm

**Response: 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.**

**Conclude with an Our Father**