

INTRODUCTION

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all! We are still in the Christmas Season and this week we will deepen on the spirit of Epiphany which we celebrated last Sunday.

Epiphany, as we all know, means 'manifestation' or 'revelation'. The feast meant that God revealed himself to the whole world. Jesus was not born only to one family, but to the whole Family of God – to the whole of humanity. He did not reveal himself to one nation only, but He is the Savior of the whole world. He manifested the universality of his love by reaching out and loving the sick, dying, poor, outcast, etc.

Jesus as the Bridegroom takes His Bride – the Church which is herself universal. He embraced the whole of humanity. That is why the Liturgy says, "Men of every race shall walk in the splendor of your sunrise." The men of every race are represented by the Magi coming from the East. "All the nations have come to worship in your presence. Your mighty deeds are clearly seen." "...All the world have seen the saving power of God." (**Isaiah 52:10**) What does this speak to us? It speaks of the mission of the Church to all nations and the internationality of Verbum Dei. Jesus wants to reveal himself and be known to the entire world. We then are the messengers who bring Good News and glad tidings. (**Isaiah 52:7**) We are like the star that guided the Magi. "You revealed your Son to the nations by the guidance of a star." "The star burned like a flame pointing the way to God."

What is the call for us these days? It is to arise with courage, with hope and to start this New Year walking in the splendor of his light as in (**Isaiah**

60:1-3), "Arise, shine out, for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen on you. ² ...on you Yahweh is rising and over you his glory can be seen. ³ The nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness.

We can respond to his call by manifesting to all that his love is universal so that, "All kings will bow down before him; all nations will serve him... He rescues the poor who call to him and those who are needy and neglected. He has pity on the weak and the poor, he saves the live of those in need." (**Psalm 72:11-13**)



MONDAY

In a country of shadows, a light has dawned

¹² Hearing that John had been arrested he withdrew to Galilee, ¹³ and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, beside the lake, on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea beyond Jordan. Galilee of the nations! ¹⁶ The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a country of shadow dark as death a light has dawned. ¹⁷ From then onwards Jesus began his proclamation with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.'...

²³ He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and illness among the people. ²⁴ His fame spread throughout Syria, and those who were suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the possessed, epileptics, the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them.

(Matthew 4:12-17, 23-24)

The world is still full of shadows and many of us perhaps are living in darkness as dark as death even as we start the year. But the truth is that a great light has dawned, greater than all the darkness in the world. We have seen it and know that this light is Jesus and His love is universal – touching every disease and sickness of humanity.

TUESDAY

We saw his star and it led us to Him.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east ² asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' ³ When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. ⁴ He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, 'At Bethlehem in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶ And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.' ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men to

see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared ⁸ and sent them on to Bethlehem with the words, 'Go and find out all about the child, and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' ⁹ Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ The sight of the star filled them with delight, ¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² But they were given a warning in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

(Matthew 2:1-11)

Like the Magi, we are called to encounter Jesus everyday; because from every encounter with Him, we can live our lives in a new way, a different way and change our old ways from where Herod was. What steps do I need to take to encounter Jesus in a new way this year?

WEDNESDAY

Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid!

⁴⁵ And at once he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side near Bethsaida, while he himself sent the crowd away. ⁴⁶ After saying goodbye to them he went off into the hills to pray. ⁴⁷ When evening came, the boat was far out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ He could see that they were hard pressed in their rowing, for the wind was against them; and about the fourth watch of the night

he came towards them, walking on the sea. He was going to pass them by, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost and cried out; ⁵⁰ for they had all seen him and were terrified. But at once he spoke to them and said, 'Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid.' ⁵¹ Then he got into the boat with them and the wind dropped.

(Mark 6:45-51)

Let us be familiar of Jesus that in the midst of the darkness, the waves and the strong winds of life, it is him who walks over them. Let us rise with courage learning more deeply to recognize and encounter him in these moments. Help us Lord to have the attitude of courage and to take you in my boat this year.

THURSDAY

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

¹⁴ Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. ¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues and everyone glorified him. ¹⁶ He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. ²⁰ He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them, 'This

text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.' ²² And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?' **(Luke 4:14-22)**

Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit proclaimed that this is a year of favour from the Lord. Let us rejoice and be glad because God is on our side and has a lot in store for us. Let us enter and live in His same universal love which Jesus understood very well as what he was sent to manifest.

FRIDAY

I am willing – be cleansed.

¹² Now it happened that Jesus was in one of the towns when suddenly a man appeared, covered with a skin-disease. Seeing Jesus he fell on his face and implored him saying, 'Sir, if you are willing you can cleanse me.' ¹³ He stretched out his hand, and touched him saying, 'I am willing. Be cleansed.' At once the skin-disease left him. ¹⁴ He ordered him to tell no one, 'But go and show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your cleansing just as Moses prescribed, as evidence to them.' ¹⁵ But the news of him kept spreading, and large crowds would gather to hear him and to have their illnesses cured, ¹⁶ but he would go off to some deserted place and pray. **(Luke 5:12-16)**

Jesus is truly the Savior of the world not only because he cures all kinds of disease and sickness, but also because he is willing to reach out to everyone. How is my willingness to reach out to everyone so that his salvation is seen by all?

SATURDAY

He must grow greater and I must grow less.

²² After this, Jesus went with his disciples into the Judaeen countryside and stayed with them there and baptised. ²³ John also was baptising at Aenon near Salim, where there was plenty of water, and people were going there and were being baptised. ²⁴ For John had not yet been put in prison. ²⁵ Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew about purification, ²⁶ so they went to John and said, 'Rabbi, the man who was with you on the far side of the Jordan, the man to whom you bore witness, is baptising now, and everyone is going to him.' ²⁷ John replied: 'No one can have anything except what is given him from heaven. ²⁸ 'You yourselves can bear me out. I said, "I am not the Christ; I am the one who has been sent to go in front of him." ²⁹ 'It is the bridegroom who has the bride; and yet the bridegroom's friend, who stands there and listens to him, is filled with joy at the bridegroom's voice. This is the joy I feel, and it is complete. ³⁰ He must grow greater, I must grow less. **(John 3:22-30)**

As the Magi were brought to prostrate and offer their gifts when they encountered Him, we are called to bring people to that same gesture and desire that I grow less so that he can grow greater. This will be my joy every day.

SUNDAY READINGS

The Baptism of the Lord

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11

Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12

2nd Reading: 1 John 5:1-9

Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"The glory of the Lord shines. We saw his star!"

January 5-11, 2015



Objective of the week:

To encounter Jesus in a new way by walking in the splendor of his light as he reveals his universal and saving power to all.