



## THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

JANUARY 7, 2024



They were overjoyed at seeing the STAR, and on entering ..they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage



### Mission Statement

“Good Shepherd parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

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### SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor  
Ed Stolarz Director of Music Ministry  
Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish  
please go to:  
Goodshepherdnj.com  
Or email us at  
gsirvington@comcast.net

## THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD [B] JANUARY 7, 2024.

**“Because you never know what’s going to happen next!”**

What I noticed on the television during the Christmas was instead of the television stations to focus on the birth of Jesus, they directed the attention of our children by bringing the movies Harry Potter novels and watching Harry Potter movies. If you ask our children today, only few them will tell you about the Magi and their discovery, who embarked a journey who never knew what road the Spirit was going to take them down next.

When Christopher Columbus coming to America, Admiral Byrd going to the South Pole, our Astronauts flying to the moon: such adventurers have always aroused our admiration and curiosity. The magi- astrologers described in today’s Gospel had to be a little crazy leaving the security of their homeland to venture forth into a strange country presided over by a mad king like Herod, in search of a Divine child. But their great Faith, curiosity, and adventurous spirit enabled them to discover the secret of the whole universe – the secret of God’s incredible love for His people – because the Child they found was no ordinary child but the very Son of God become man.

Introduction: The Greek word Epiphany (*επιφάνεια*), means appearance or *manifestation*. First, the angels revealed Jesus to the shepherds. In the Western Church, the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates Jesus’ first appearance to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi, while in the Eastern Church, the feast is the commemoration of the baptism of Christ where the Father and the Holy Spirit gave combined testimony to Jesus’ identity as Son of God. Later, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus revealed himself as the promised Messiah, and at Cana he revealed his Divinity by transforming water into wine. These multiple revelations are all suggested by the Feast of the Epiphany.

The summary of Today’s Old Testament reading, Isaiah 60:1-6, is chosen partly because it mentions non-Jews bringing gifts in homage to the God of Israel. Here the Prophet Isaiah, consoling the people in exile, speaks of the restoration of New Jerusalem from which the glory of Yahweh becomes visible even to the pagan nations. Thus, the prophet in this passage celebrates the Divine Light emanating from Jerusalem and foresees all the nations acknowledging and enjoying that Light and walking by it.

**Gospel exegesis: The Magi and the star:** The *Magi* were not Kings, but a caste of Persian priests who served Kings by using their knowledge to search for this extraordinary star that appeared. The names of the magi finding Jesus were three, Magi, Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior, is based on the fact that three gifts are mentioned in Matthew’s Gospel: gold, frankincense and myrrh. “Matthew nowhere says that there were three wise men from the East.

The Magi took another route to return to their homes, let us choose a better way of life, abstaining from proud and impure thoughts, evil habits and selfish behavior. Let us become the Star, leading others to Jesus, as the star led the Magi to Him.

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
(Fr. Antony Kadavil, Vatican News)

### Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm  
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am  
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am  
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Mass Intentions For the week of January 6—January 13

Saturday 5:30pm In Memory of Evangeuina C. Paran  
Jan 06

Sunday 9:00am In Memory of Catrina Borg  
Jan 07 11:00am In Memory of Tristen Brevik

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of James Gibbs  
Jan 08

Tuesday 7:00am For God's Protection and Guidance of Venus Matthews  
Jan 09

Wednesday 7:00am For God's Protection and Guidance of Avenelle Samaroo  
Jan 10

Thursday 7:00am For God's Protection and Guidance of Sandi Mosley  
Jan 11

Friday 7:00am For the 60th Wedding Anniversary of Rudy and Baby Suarez  
Jan 12

Saturday 8:30am For the Repose of the Soul of Alfred Tatyrek  
Jan 13 5:30pm For God's Protection and Guidance of Rihanna Scott

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Kingsley Oba	Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw	
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews	
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick		

\* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

**Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568**

**Announcement**

**Our Church now has an Adoration Room. All are invited to visit the room, Mon-Fri 7:30AM-5:00PM.**

**To gain access to the adoration room, reservations are required. Please visit the rectory to reserve your date and time.**

**Please contact Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intensions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers**



**REPORT ABUSE**

Protecting God's Children

The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all credible complaints, and encourages anyone with knowledge of an act of sexual misconduct by the clergy, religious and lay staff to tell us immediately, so that we may take appropriate action to protect others and provide support to sexual abuse victims.

Individuals who wish to report an allegation may do so by calling the Child and Youth Protection. 201-407-3256, Fax: 973-497-4001. Or In person, 171 Clifton Avenue. Newark, NJ 07104.

**Ministries:** If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lector \_\_\_\_\_ Eucharistic Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Collection Report		December 31, 2023
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 2,747.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 3,753.00
<b>Fiscal Year to Date</b>		
Budget:		\$346,811.00
Actual:		\$54,307.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$292,504.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$ 3.152.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$3,348.00

**Minister Assignments January 13-January 14, 2024**

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presider
01/13 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Denise Perry Barbara Banks Nellie Bate	Fr. Val
01/14 9:00am	Ernest Devine	Helen Chife-Akude Stanislaus Egeolu- Obmezie	Fr. Val
01/14 11:00am	Janice Camacho	Jerome Hule Pathinathan Thevarajah Melyn Lopina	Fr. Val

**GSP EVENT CALENDER**

Sunday Jan 07
The Epiphany of the Lord 11AM Mass with Cardinal Tobin
Monday Jan 08
The Baptism of the Lord
Tuesday Jan 09
Wednesday Jan 10
Thursday Jan 11
Friday Jan 12
Saturday Jan 13
Saint Hilary

**Good Shepherd Parish Information**

**RECTORY HOURS:** Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

**Parish Registration** Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

**THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** Saturday 4:45-5:15 pm

**THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM** In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

**THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY** Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

**PASTORAL OF THE SICK** Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

**ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA.** Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at (973-375-8568

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568

## SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD, [B] JAN. 7, 2024.

### PILGRIMS - HUMAN LIFE IS A PILGRIMAGE

Introduction: The Greek word Epiphany (*επιφάνεια*), really means revelation, or *appearance* or *manifestation* of our Lord to the world. First, the angels revealed Jesus to the shepherds. In the Western Church, the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi, while in the Eastern Church, the feast is the commemoration of the baptism of Christ where the Father and the Holy Spirit gave combined testimony to Jesus' identity as Son of God. Later, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus revealed himself as the promised Messiah, and at Cana he revealed his Divinity by transforming water into wine. These multiple revelations are all suggested by the Feast of the Epiphany.

On this Feast of the Epiphany, when mentioned or celebrated what comes about this feast, there are a number of images, metaphors, analogies, and similes from the scripture readings we hear, from the hymns we sing, from the legends we have heard, and from the personal experiences we have had that give both personal and collective meaning to our celebration of this feast of epiphany of the Lord. If we were to sit down with a piece of paper and pencil with the intention of writing down what comes to our mind when we think about the Feast of the Epiphany, what would we write? Undoubtedly, some of us would write the words: "shining star," "magi," "three gifts," and more likely the words "gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Our words might include: "Melchior," "Balthazar," and "Gaspar," the names of the three magi according to medieval legends. And possibly, but not very likely, our words would include "Asian," "Persian," and "Ethiopian," the three nationalities known to the old world represented by the magi.

But I would venture to say that the word that would not likely be found in any one's list, including my own, is the word "pilgrim." **And yet, the word "pilgrim" is the theme of today's celebration and more importantly the underlying theme of our lives.**

When we study the poetic language and the historical context of the first reading, the words of the Prophet Isaiah describe the Israelites as pilgrims who are journeying home to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon. Their way is illuminated by the shining light of God's glory. Traveling with the Israelites are pilgrims from far-off lands bringing with them caravans of wealth and gifts, as they proclaim the glory of the God of Israel. When we view the gospel from the perspective of its writer, the three magi fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah as pilgrims when they find Jesus after encountering Herod. Not as wealthy royalty but as humble pilgrims they come to the infant Jesus with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Epiphany means the manifestation of our Lord to the Gentiles. Mary and Joseph welcomed all kinds of visitors those days: the shepherds, the animals, the angels, and lastly, they welcomed the Magi (three wise men) to come in and offered precious gifts to Baby Jesus. We may say: without the presence of the Magi, Christmas is not fulfilled according to prophet Isaiah: "*Caravans of caramels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord.*" Clearly, the Good News of *God made man* is not for Israel only, but for the whole world. Mary and Joseph did not keep Baby Jesus for themselves, but they showed him the whole creation. How can we welcome and invite all people from everywhere to come here and worship Jesus?

When we think about the three magi and their journey to find Jesus, it becomes clear that to be human is to be a pilgrim. From conception to old age, we long for, we search for, and we ever so slowly travel toward the one who calls us home. So, what does it mean for us to be people on the move, a pilgrim people in this life?

When we finally arrive at our destination, we appreciate our ingenuity and our determination. Our experience of being "seasoned travelers," dependent upon ourselves but in dialogue with others, encourages us to recognize and appreciate our own capabilities and the capabilities of those who have helped us. The internal dimension of a pilgrim is the persistent and undying source of life that enables a pilgrim to continue living life no matter the obstacles, no matter the struggles, no matter the disappointments and discouragements that might appear in our pathway.

**Our human life is a journey of the heart.** We are journeying our way home to the God who lovingly hears and attends to our every need while we are journeying. We travel from different directions, at different speeds, with different customs and traditions. But we all have the same Godly goal. Because of that common goal, all who travel toward it are pilgrims with us.