

Epiphany of the Lord

Is. 60: 1-6; Eph. 3: 2-3a, 5-6; Matt. 2: 1-12

Have you ever been in total darkness? Many of us have gone into a room at night and marvelled at how dark it was, only to discover that, after a while, we could make out the objects in the room in the light coming from under the door and through the closed blinds.

I was a member of the Photography Club in high school. We used to buy our photographic film in bulk and load our own film cassettes. The process had to be carried out in total darkness, so we entered the darkroom, the walls of which were painted black, through two doors that were sealed against the entry of light. It was an eerie feeling not being able to see my hand in front of my face and to do something completely by feel. It felt like the walls were closing in!

We are not made for darkness. We are 'children of the light'. The year 2020 was especially dark with so much sickness and death, economic destruction and job loss, social upheaval and injustice, on top of ongoing issues such as environmental damage and climate change. As we enter 2021, all of us are looking for a light in the darkness. We hope for a brighter 2021.

This Sunday, we are celebrating the Epiphany of the Lord; the manifestation or the revelation of the Lord to the wise men from the east. The wise men (magi) had learned of the wondrous event of the birth of Jesus through their study of the stars and from ancient prophecies; prophecies such as that of Isaiah in 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.*

So the magi had faith in the long-awaited birth of Jesus and undertook a perilous journey following a star until they were able to realize the revelation of Jesus. They travelled in darkness in faith, hoping for and eventually coming into the light and the glory of the Lord.

Isn't that exactly what we are doing? We are travelling through the darkness of this world, with all its sadness, sickness, violence, death, and destruction with faith in our Lord. We have not seen Him but we have faith in His presence.

And what is the 'star' that we are following to lead us to Him? We have the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, and we have the teachings of the Church. We have faith that, if we follow our 'star' like the wise men, we will one day see for ourselves the light and the glory of the Lord.