

LITURGY & LIFE
THE EMMAUS JOURNEY
The Epiphany of the Lord
Cycle B

**A Catholic Update Companion to the
Sunday Readings**

CHRIST IS REVEALED TO ALL NATIONS
Arise in faith • Follow the light • Offer your
gifts • Return by a new way

1: FOR THE HOMILIST/PCL OR OCIA CO-ORD.: CHRIST SPEAKS - WE LISTEN

Sunday Readings

Liturgical Color	White — Christmas Season
First Reading	Isaiah 60:1–6
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13
Second Reading	Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6
Gospel	Matthew 2:1–12

The Heart of This Sunday's Gospel

THE NATIONS COME TO THE LIGHT

The Magi begin far from Bethlehem, yet they are attentive enough to notice a sign and courageous enough to follow it. Their journey is not simple. They must leave what is familiar, ask questions, face uncertainty, and discern between the false power of Herod and the quiet kingship of the child. When they finally encounter Jesus with Mary His mother, they fall down in worship and open their treasures. Their gifts reveal what their hearts have discovered: this child is King, God, and the One who will offer His life. The Gospel then gives one final sign of conversion—they return home by another way. Epiphany is not only the story of distant visitors. It is the revelation that Christ has come for every nation and every person. Those who truly encounter Him do not remain unchanged. They worship, offer themselves, and begin to walk a new path.

The Liturgical Thread

Isaiah commands Jerusalem to arise because God's glory has dawned, and the nations are drawn toward that light. Psalm 72 describes the just king before whom rulers bow and who defends the poor and afflicted. Saint Paul announces the mystery once hidden and now revealed: the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise through the Gospel. Matthew shows that promise taking flesh as the Magi journey from afar to worship Jesus. Together the readings proclaim a universal salvation that does not erase the peoples of the world but gathers them into communion in Christ. The disciple who receives this light is sent to become a humble witness, especially to those who are still seeking.

THE MOVEMENT OF THE READINGS

God's glory rises over the nations → The peoples are drawn toward the light → The mystery is revealed: all share one inheritance in Christ → The Magi seek, find, worship, and offer their gifts → The disciple returns by a new way and becomes a light for others

Listening With the Heart

Listen

Read Matthew 2:1–12 slowly. Notice the contrast between the searching Magi, the troubled city, the knowledgeable but unmoving religious leaders, the fearful Herod, and the child who receives worship in humility.

Reflect

Where do you recognize yourself in this Gospel? Are you seeking, hesitating, protecting control, remaining intellectually informed but spiritually unmoved, or rejoicing because Christ has drawn near?

Pray

Ask Jesus for the grace to follow the light He has already given you. Pray for someone who is searching for faith, belonging, truth, or peace.

Rest

Rest with the words: “They were overjoyed at seeing the star.” Let gratitude rise for every person, event, question, and grace through which God has quietly guided you toward Christ.

Carry This Word

MATTHEW 2:11

“They prostrated themselves and did him homage.”

2: FOR THE CATECHIST: THE CHURCH TEACHES - WE LEARN

Catechetical Focus

EPIPHANY: CHRIST FOR EVERY PEOPLE

The word epiphany means manifestation or revelation. On this feast, the Church celebrates Jesus Christ revealed as Savior not only of Israel but of all nations. The Magi represent the peoples of the earth who are drawn by grace toward the light of Christ. Their journey teaches that God can awaken faith through creation, conscience, questions, study, beauty, and the witness of others; yet every authentic search must finally lead to the living Christ. Catholic faith is therefore both particular and universal: Jesus is born within Israel and fulfills God's promises, while His saving mission embraces every people, language, and culture. The Church receives this mystery as a call to evangelize with humility, dialogue, hospitality, and reverence for the seeds of truth already present in those who are still searching.

Catholic Update Resources

PRIMARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C2206A | Evangelization and Dialogue: Building Renewed Relationships

This Update provides the missionary center of Epiphany. The nations are drawn toward Christ, yet they are not coerced or treated as problems to be solved. Evangelization begins with respect, listening, relationship, truthful witness, and confidence that the Holy Spirit is already at work. The Magi arrive with genuine questions, and their search is received within the story of God's promises. For catechumens and candidates, the resource helps distinguish evangelization from argument or pressure. To announce Christ faithfully is to share the hope one has received, listen carefully to another person's experience, and invite rather than manipulate. The disciple becomes a light by making Christ recognizable through humility, integrity, hospitality, and love.

SECONDARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C2309A | Sacred Art: Epiphanies of Beauty

This Update deepens the feast through the Church's understanding of beauty as a doorway to mystery. The star, the journey, the child, the gifts, and the act of adoration have inspired sacred art for centuries because beauty can awaken wonder and direct the heart beyond itself. Sacred images do not replace Christ; they help the believer contemplate His saving presence. Read alongside the Epiphany Gospel, this resource invites participants to notice how churches, icons, stained glass, music, and devotional art proclaim the faith to both the instructed and the searching. Beauty becomes evangelical when it leads to reverence, truth, worship, and renewed life rather than remaining merely decorative.

The Catechist's Companion

Key Teaching

Jesus Christ is the light and Savior of all nations. Those who encounter Him are called to worship, offer their gifts, respect the sincere search of others, and bear humble witness that leads people toward the living Christ.

Session Aim

Help participants understand Epiphany as the manifestation of Christ to all nations, distinguish evangelization from pressure or religious competition, recognize beauty and sacred art as pathways toward contemplation, and choose one concrete way to welcome or accompany a person who is still searching.

Formation Objectives

- Explain the meaning of Epiphany as Christ's manifestation to the nations.
- Describe the Magi's journey as a pattern of seeking, discernment, worship, offering, and conversion.
- Explain Saint Paul's teaching that the Gentiles are coheirs and members of one body in Christ.
- Distinguish evangelization through relationship and witness from coercion, argument, or manipulation.
- Identify one practical action that makes the parish or household more welcoming to people from another culture, nation, or religious background.

Integrating This Week's Catholic Updates

C2206A gives the chapter its missionary method: evangelization takes place through renewed relationships, attentive dialogue, truthful witness, and respect for freedom. C2309A adds the evangelical language of beauty, showing how sacred art can awaken wonder and invite contemplation of Christ. Together with the Sunday readings, the Updates form one movement: God's light rises, seekers are drawn, the Church receives people from every nation, beauty and witness point toward Christ, and the disciple returns to ordinary life by a new way.

Expand the Conversation

- Why do the Magi begin moving while the religious experts in Jerusalem remain still?
- How can Christians proclaim that Christ is the universal Savior while treating people of other religions with genuine respect?
- What forms of beauty have helped you sense God's presence or become more open to faith?
- What might prevent a parish from being experienced as a welcoming home for people of different cultures or backgrounds?

Common Misunderstandings

- The Magi are not presented as magicians practicing occult arts for Christian imitation. The Gospel portrays them as Gentile seekers whom God draws toward Christ.
- Evangelization is not manipulation or winning arguments. It is the Spirit-led proclamation of Christ through truth, love, witness, invitation, and respect for freedom.
- Religious dialogue does not mean pretending all beliefs are identical. Catholics can confess Christ clearly while listening respectfully and cooperating for the common good.
- The gifts of the Magi are not a transaction that purchases divine favor. They are acts of worship and self-offering in response to grace already received.

- Returning “by another way” is more than a travel detail. It symbolizes the conversion that follows a true encounter with Christ.

Church References

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 528; 748–856; 839–856; 905; 1145–1162; 1674; 2500–2503. Scripture connections: Genesis 12:1–3; Numbers 24:17; Psalm 67; Isaiah 2:1–5; Luke 2:29–32; John 1:1–14; John 8:12; Acts 10:34–48; Revelation 7:9–12; Revelation 21:22–26.

OCIA Connection

For catechumens and candidates, Epiphany confirms that the Church is not the possession of one ethnicity, language, or social group. In Baptism, people from every nation are incorporated into one Body without losing the legitimate richness of their cultures. Catechists should invite participants to name the persons, questions, and experiences that have functioned like a star on their journey. Sponsors help them move from seeking to worship, from admiration to self-offering, and from private faith toward participation in the Church’s mission.

Catechist’s Insight

PASTORAL CARE

Participants may come from different religious traditions, cultures, or family backgrounds, and some may carry painful experiences of aggressive proselytism, religious prejudice, or exclusion. Present evangelization as grateful witness rather than conquest. Avoid caricaturing other religions or cultures, and do not imply that sincere questions are a failure of faith. The Magi model a genuine search, while Herod warns against using religion to preserve power or control. Catechists should help participants speak clearly about the uniqueness of Christ while practicing respect, patient listening, and freedom of conscience. When cultural customs are discussed, distinguish what can be welcomed and purified in Christ from what would contradict the Gospel, doing so without contempt for persons or peoples.

Prepare more than a lesson about the Magi. Help participants examine the difference between curiosity and discipleship, information and movement, admiration and worship. Use Saint Paul’s language of coheirs and members of one body to address racism, cultural superiority, nationalism, and exclusion without turning the session into partisan debate. Invite participants to engage one sacred image carefully and ask what it reveals about Christ. Give time for honest questions about other religions, evangelization, and family members who do not share the faith. The catechist’s responsibility is to hold together clarity about Christ, reverence for every person, and practical formation for missionary discipleship.

3: FOR THE CANDIDATE/CATECHUMEN: THE DISCIPLE RESPONDS - WE LIVE

Living the Gospel This Week

- What light has God already placed before me that I have hesitated to follow?
- Am I willing to move beyond religious knowledge toward worship and surrender?
- What gift or ability could become an offering to Christ and service to others?
- Do my words about faith invite sincere dialogue or create defensiveness and distance?
- Whom do I overlook because of culture, nationality, language, religion, or social background?
- What “new way” is Christ asking me to take after encountering Him?

Choosing to Be an Intentional Disciple

WHAT IS CHRIST ASKING OF ME TODAY?

What gift, habit, or relationship can I place before Christ so that my life may point others toward His light?

Intentional discipleship is movement toward Christ and movement away from whatever resists His light. Choose one concrete response: begin a conversation with a sincere seeker, offer a gift or talent in service, address a prejudice, return to a neglected practice of worship, or take a step toward greater participation in parish life. Do not wait for a perfect map. Follow the light already given.

Holy Habit

THE THREE-GIFT EXAMEN

At the end of each day, imagine placing three gifts before Christ. Gold: Where did I honor Him as King through my choices? Frankincense: Where did I pray, worship, or recognize His presence? Myrrh: What suffering, sacrifice, or act of love did I unite with Him? Conclude by asking: “Lord Jesus, show me the new way You are asking me to walk tomorrow.”

Faith Into Practice

- Pray for one person who is sincerely searching for God, truth, belonging, or peace.
- Offer one personal gift—time, talent, attention, or material help—to someone in need.
- Spend ten minutes contemplating an image of the Epiphany or another work of sacred art.
- Learn the name and story of a parishioner from another culture or country.
- Remove one subtle barrier that makes newcomers feel like outsiders.
- Write a brief account of the persons or events that have served as a “star” in your faith journey.
- Invite someone to Mass, a parish event, or a conversation about faith without pressure or expectation.

Personal Reflection

What have I truly placed before Christ, and what am I still holding back? How would my daily route change if worship—not fear, convenience, or social pressure—directed my next step?

4: FOR THE SPONSOR: THE CHURCH SENDS - WE WITNESS

Sponsor's Path of Accompaniment

Share Your Faith	Share about a time when God drew you through a question, a person, beauty, suffering, or an unexpected sign. Explain what helped you recognize Christ and what changed after the encounter. Speak honestly about the journey, including uncertainty, rather than presenting faith as effortless.
Walk Together	Read Matthew 2:1–12 together. Trace the Magi's movements: notice, seek, ask, discern, rejoice, worship, offer, and return. Ask which movement best describes the participant's present journey and what "another way" might mean in daily life.
Pray Together	Pray before a crèche, icon, stained-glass window, or image of the Epiphany. Each person names one gift to place before Christ—time, talent, a relationship, a fear, or a sacrifice. Conclude: "Jesus, Light of the nations, guide every sincere seeker to Your truth and peace."
Experience the Church	Take a brief "sacred beauty walk" through the parish church. Choose three features—an image, window, statue, vestment, hymn, or architectural symbol—and discuss what each reveals about Christ. Introduce the participant to a parishioner from a different cultural background and listen to one way that person's tradition celebrates Christ.
Continue the Journey	Complete one practical Epiphany action together before the next meeting: deliver a useful gift to a refugee or immigrant family through a parish or local ministry; welcome an international student or newcomer to a parish gathering; visit a cultural Catholic community or approved sacred-art exhibit; or prepare a small "blessing bag" for someone in need. Afterward, reflect on where Christ was encountered and how the action helped another person feel seen, welcomed, or guided toward hope.

Faith at Home

Create a household Epiphany blessing. Place a star near the home prayer space and write the names of people who need guidance, hope, or welcome. Read Matthew 2:1–12, bless the doorway with holy water if appropriate, and pray that everyone who enters may encounter Christ's peace. Choose one gift the household can offer together to a person or family in need.

Parish Life

Invite the parish to examine whether people from every nation and background can recognize a genuine home within the community. Are cultural communities welcomed as full participants rather than occasional guests? Are visitors greeted personally? Are sacred art and symbols explained to those unfamiliar with them? Choose

one action—multilingual hospitality, a cultural faith-sharing evening, newcomer accompaniment, or service with migrants and refugees—that makes Christ’s universal invitation visible.

Go Forth This Week

Follow Christ’s light, offer one gift in service, and help one searching person experience the Church as a place of welcome.

Prayer for the Week

Lord Jesus Christ, Light of the nations, You drew the Magi across distance and uncertainty until they found You with Mary Your mother. Awaken in us the same desire to seek You, the humility to ask honest questions, and the courage to leave behind whatever keeps us from worship. Receive the gold of our choices, the incense of our prayer, and the myrrh of our sacrifices. Purify our motives when we are tempted to use faith for power, pride, or argument. Teach us to evangelize through truth spoken with love, patient listening, generous hospitality, and lives that make Your presence visible. Bless every person who is searching, every culture longing for peace, and every household needing Your light. Lead us home by a new way, so that having encountered You, we may become signs of hope for the world. Amen.

Emmaus Insight

On the road to Emmaus, Christ opened the Scriptures and revealed Himself in the breaking of the bread. At Epiphany, the Magi follow a light, receive the Word made flesh, and return home transformed. Every true encounter with Christ becomes an epiphany: His presence is recognized, the heart bows in worship, and the disciple carries His light along a new road.