

# Dear Padre,

*I recently lost my husband of sixty years. I prayed for him through his four-year illness. Since he has died, I cannot pray. Any advice for me?*

My heartfelt condolences on your profound loss. When someone we love dies, a part of us dies too. Sometimes, the trauma is so severe that it can even affect our relationship with God.

Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identified five stages of grief. In the denial stage, some people can't accept the reality of the death. It becomes too much to handle. In the anger stage, some may question their belief in God—especially if their prayer requests (such as, “Please God, if you heal my loved one, I will...”) weren’t successful in the bargaining stage. People in the depression stage feel overwhelmed by the reality of the loss and may not always feel like connecting with others—even with God in prayer. However, in the acceptance stage, emotions stabilize, and a person comes to terms with their new reality. Nothing makes up for the absence of a loved one, but people manage to cope and live on.

It’s because you loved so deeply that the loss feels so deep. God accepts you completely; God understands how you feel. He wants you to be at peace and live life fully. Our compassionate God yearns to help console you and offer assistance in your healing process until you can embrace him again in prayer. ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR / DearPadre.org

**A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV**  
*Let us resolve to bring [God’s] love everywhere, never forgetting that each of our sisters and brothers is a dwelling place of God and that his presence is manifested above all in the little ones, in the poor and the suffering, who ask us to be thoughtful and compassionate Christians.*

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 25, 2025



YANDRY FERNANDEZ PERDOMO / CATHOPIC

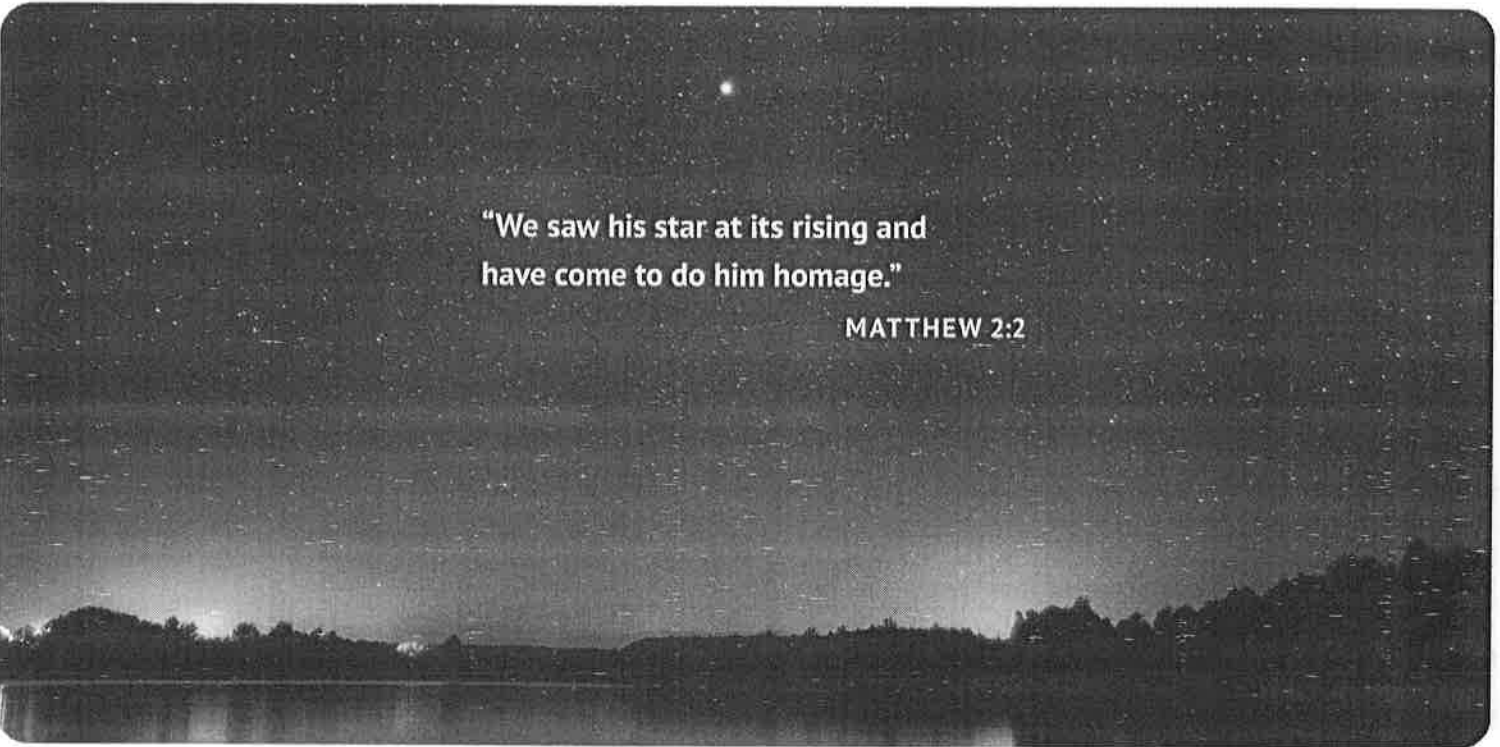
## Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

<b>Monday</b> January 5 <i>St. John Neumann, Bishop</i> 1 Jn 3:22–4:6 Mt 4:12–17, 23–25	<b>Wednesday</b> January 7 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 4:11–18 Mk 6:45–52	<b>Saturday</b> January 10 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 5:14–21 Jn 3:22–30
<b>Tuesday</b> January 6 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 4:7–10 Mk 6:34–44	<b>Thursday</b> January 8 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 4:19–5:4 Lk 4:14–22a	<b>Sunday</b> January 11 <i>The Baptism of the Lord</i> Is 42:1–4, 6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mt 3:13–17
	<b>Friday</b> January 9 <i>Christmas Weekday</i> 1 Jn 5:5–13 Lk 5:12–16	

# Our Parish COMMUNITY

January 4, 2026  
*The Epiphany of the Lord (A)*  
Isaiah 60:1–6 / Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6 / Matthew 2:1–12



“We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

MATTHEW 2:2

## Following Jesus Without a Star to Guide Us

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

“We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage” (Matthew 2:2) describes the spark that sent the Magi on their journey. Something unusual in the sky, interpreted as a sign of something wonderful—in response, they changed direction in their lives and devoted themselves to a completely different path. As wonderful as it might well be, a special star in the heavens is not the ordinary experience of how we learn to follow the Lord or discern his will. If only there could be a sign in God’s universe for each of us, beckoning us forward, clarifying what we need to do, setting down the path that needs to be followed. Perhaps life would be much simpler. Or perhaps not?

Would it truly be less complicated if everything were made clear and certain? Is the manifestation of God’s grace and blessings confined to the straight and narrow, or can we also experience God in the chaos—“in the weeds,” so to speak. Human experience seems to suggest that life is more “gray” than “black and white.” There is real grace in the journey, in making mistakes, even in choosing something that is incomplete. Thankfully, God’s grace does not need perfection to be powerful. We can know and follow God’s will for us in the ordinary moments of day-to-day living. We do not need the extraordinary or the dramatic. ●



LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

### Reflect

*How can I resolve to look for God in the unplanned, the unexpected, the interruptions?*

Office hours are Wednesday & Thursday 7:30 am—5:30 pm.

If there is an Emergency you may call Corinne at 715-250-0567 or

Father David at 920-228-1814. Thank-you.

St Mary's Mass schedule in Black Creek: Saturdays @ 4 PM,

Sundays @ 8 AM, Tuesday—Friday @ 7:30 AM

Father David Greskowiak—Administrator

Saturday 12/28/25 = TBA Attendance = TBA

Amount needed per week - \$ 1,583.27

Mass Intentions

1/04/2026— Living & Deceased Family members of Frances & John Short by Nancy Nolan

1/11/2026— Carol Herb by Herb Family

Mass Servers —

1/04/2026— Jared Peters, Jamesen Boerst, & Nina Drossart

1/11/2026— Landon & Natalie Fischer, Beau Diemel

Ministers of the Word —

1/04/2026— Jerry Nowak

1/22/2026— Troy Wegner

Hospitality

1/04/2026— Barb Erb, Charlie Herb, Pam Wetts

1/11/2026— Steve & Sheila Hartlaben, Rene LaFond

### Happy Birthday!

January 06 Kaylajo Zuleger; 07 Ivy Martin; 10 Jerilyn Henn, Shyann Maroszek, Jeff Peters; 11 Ariel Hartleben; 12 Cole Diemel, Jeff Peters; 14 Sara Bohm, David Nowak; 15 Sharon Hasser, Gerald Nowak; 16 Amy Gray; 18 Norbert Short; 19 Charles Beschta; 21 Jamie Martin; 22 Joanne Heinemayer; 26 Jared Peters; 28 Eli Inman; 29 Landon Fischer, Ami Hanus, Sierra Peeters; 30 Jack Banker, Keith Pennings

### 2026 Religious Calendars

Catholic Heritage 2026 calendars, compliments of Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home, are available at the entrances of the church.

### RE NEWS:

Wed. 01/07/26—Teacher's Meeting at 6:30 PM

Mon. 01/12/26—RE Committee Meeting at 6 PM

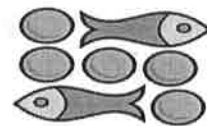
Wed. 01/14/26—Class resume At 6:30 PM

### Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

Wednesday, January 21 4—6 PM

Saturday, January 24 9—11 AM

Thank you for all the donations so far this year!!



Mass Intentions that are available for the year of 2026:

January 25; February 1, 18(Ash Wednesday); March 8, 22, 29; April 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 19, 26; May 3, 10, 24, 25; June 7, 21, 28; July 5, 12, 26; August 2, 23, 30; September 6, 20(Picnic), 27; October 4, 11, 18, 25; November 8, 15, Deer Hunter's Mass, Thanksgiving, 29; December 13, 20, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, 27, and New Years. You may contact Corinne at the office to reserve your dates.

### Epiphany Blessing of the Home with Chalk

There is an old Catholic custom of blessing homes with chalk over the front door on the Solemnity of the Epiphany. The blessing of a home encourages Catholics to dedicate their life at home to God and to others. We have blessed chalk available at the crib scene along with some napkins with which to wrap it. Here is an example of that blessing which you can use in your own home.

All: Make the Sign of the Cross.

Head of Household: "Peace be to this house and to all who dwell here, in the name of the Lord."

All: "Blessed be God forever."

Take blessed chalk (of any color) and mark over your front door:

20 + C + M + B + 26 saying:

"The three Wise Men,"

C "Caspar"

M "Melchior"

B "and Balthasar"

"followed the star of the Son of God who became human"

20 "two thousand"

26 "and twenty-six years ago."

+ + "May Christ bless our home"

+ + "and remain with us throughout the New Year."

Amen."

(Each name could be written by a different member of the household.)

Head of Household: "Lord God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness and the keeping of your law. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our love for each other may go out to all. We ask this through Christ our Lord."

All: Amen.

C M B above the door, also stands for *Christus*

*Mansionem Benedicat*, which is Latin for "May Christ Bless this House."

The rooms of the house may also be sprinkled with the Holy Water that has received the special Epiphany blessing.

Why do we use chalk to bless our homes at Epiphany? Chalk, a substance made of common elements of the earth, is used by teachers to instruct students and by children in their games and play...Further, chalk will not permanently mar the dwelling. As its image fades from view over time...(and) after a year passes and a new Epiphany arrives, (we) will have the opportunity once again to celebrate the themes of this season and once again to seek God's blessing on (our) homes and on those who come and go through the home.

### Reflection on the Epiphany

Here is an excerpt from an article titled: "*Epiphany of Our Lord, Sunday January 4, 2026*" found on the "Young Catholics" website—[young-catholics.com](http://young-catholics.com):

### The Light That Shines for All

The Feast of the Epiphany is a celebration of light. Isaiah's prophecy speaks of a great light shining upon Jerusalem. This light attracts nations and kings. It shows the presence of God and marks the beginning of a new time. This prophecy points to the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. He is the light for all people. Isaiah mentions gifts of gold and frankincense. These gifts are the same as those the Magi brought to Jesus. This connection ties the Old Testament to the New Testament. It shows how the prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus. The gifts of the Magi honor Jesus as king and God.

The Epiphany is not just about an event long ago. It reminds us that Jesus' mission is for everyone. He came for all nations and all people. The light of Jesus shines on us today, guiding us and showing us the way. This light invites us to follow Jesus and to share His light with others.

### A Universal Invitation

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul talks about a mystery revealed to him. This mystery is that Gentiles are co-heirs with Jews, sharing in the same promises through Jesus. This reading fits well with the Feast of the Epiphany. It shows that the salvation Jesus brings is for everyone. In the past, there were strong divisions between Jews and Gentiles. Paul's message was radical because it broke down these barriers. He explained that in Jesus, all people are welcome. This is the same message we see in the Epiphany, where the Magi, who were not Jews, came to worship Jesus. Their visit shows that Jesus came for all nations.

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates this inclusive message. It reminds us that Jesus' grace is for everyone, no matter their background. The light of Jesus shines on all people, inviting us to be part of God's family. We are called to live out this message of unity and share the good news with others.

### The Magi and the Humble King

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of the Magi visiting Jesus. This is more than a story about wise men bringing gifts. It shows that Jesus is the Messiah for all people. The star guiding the Magi symbolizes God's light leading all nations to Jesus. This light is different from the power of King Herod. Herod is powerful and fearful. Jesus, though a baby, shows a different kind of kingship. He is humble and vulnerable, yet He changes the world. Matthew's account highlights that Jesus' mission is for everyone, not just for the Jews. Some think Matthew added details to show this point. But even without proof against it, this story is important in our faith. It shows that from the start, Jesus' life was marked by signs for all people, beyond Israel.

The contrast between Jesus and Herod is clear. Herod hears of a new king and reacts with violence. He orders the killing of male children to protect his power. Jesus, as a baby, is innocent and helpless. Yet, He represents a new kind of authority. This story sets the stage for Jesus' ministry, which challenges traditional views of power. Jesus' kingship is marked by humility and love. He does not come with force but with gentleness. The Magi, wise and powerful in their own right, bow down to this humble king. This act shows that true wisdom recognizes the value of humility and love.

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates this revelation. It shows us that God's kingdom is different from earthly kingdoms. In God's kingdom, the humble are lifted up, and true power is found in love and service. Jesus came for all people, and His light shines on everyone.

As we reflect on the Epiphany, we are reminded to follow the example of the Magi. We are called to seek Jesus, recognize His light, and honor Him as our king. Let us embrace the humility and love that Jesus shows us and share His light with the world.

