

The Epiphany of the Lord

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we celebrate the great Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. The word "Epiphany" means "revelation" or "manifestation." After the quiet, hidden night in the stable at Bethlehem, today is the day God pulls back the curtain and shows His Son to the entire world.

In our first reading, the prophet Isaiah looks at a people who feel defeated and lost in darkness. He shouts to them: "Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come." We often live as if we are still in the dark. The News discourages us, by our family struggles, or by our own sins. But Epiphany tells us that the darkness is over. The "Sun of Justice" has risen. Isaiah tells us that when we walk in this light, others will be drawn to us. As your priest, I ask you: Do people see the light of Christ when they look at you? Do they see a joy that does not make sense to the world? That is the light Isaiah is talking about.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, reveals what he calls a "mystery." For a long time, people believed that God's covenant was a private club. But Paul tells us that the Gentiles—that is, all the nations of the world—are now "co-heirs" of the promise. This is a beautiful truth for us today. It means there is no one—no neighbor, no stranger, no enemy—who is outside the reach of God's love. If God welcomed the Magi, who were foreigners and pagans from the East, then He welcomes every person who walks through the doors of this church. In Christ, we are one family.

The Gospel tells us the famous story of the Magi. These men were seekers. They were looking at the stars, searching for the truth. Their journey gives us a roadmap for our own life of faith: They Noticed the Sign: The Magi saw a star. God is always dropping "stars" into our lives—a nudge in our conscience, a beautiful sunset, or a word from a friend. To find God, we must be awake and paying attention. They Moved: It was not enough to see the star; they had to follow it. They left their comfort, their homes, and their security. Faith is not a feeling; it is a movement. Sometimes following Jesus means leaving behind our old ways of thinking to go where He leads. They Persevered: They went to the wrong place first (Herod's palace). They got lost, but they did not give up. If you feel lost in your faith right now, do not stop walking. Keep searching, and the "star" will appear again.

When they finally found the Child with Mary, they did something profound: they knelt. These great, wealthy men humbled themselves before a tiny baby. They recognized that He was the King of Kings. Gold for a King: We give Him our resources and our loyalty. Frankincense for God: We give Him our prayer and our worship. Myrrh for His sacrifice: We offer Him our sufferings and our own mortality. What is the "treasure chest" of your heart today? Jesus does not want your money; He wants your time, your trust, and your love. He wants you to offer Him the "gold" of your daily work and the "incense" of your morning prayers.

The most important sentence in the Gospel is the very last one: "They departed for their country by another way." My dear people, you cannot meet Jesus and stay the same. You cannot come to this Altar, receive the Body of Christ, and go back to the "old way" of gossiping, holding grudges, or living for yourself. To encounter the Lord is to be changed. As we leave Mass today, let us go back to our homes "by another way"—the way of kindness, the way of mercy, and the way of the Cross. Like the Magi, let us be witnesses that the Light has truly come into the world.

My dear Brothers and sisters, the star is still shining. Jesus is still waiting to be found. Like the Magi, let us be brave enough to follow the light, humble enough to kneel before the Lord, and generous enough to give Him our very best. May this Epiphany change our hearts, so that we may truly become "shining lights" for the world to see.