

Epiphany of the Lord C.19; Isa 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12, *Go and Shine!*

It is the great feast of *the Epiphany*.

And you have probably heard the observation - that *if* the wise men had been women: They would have asked directions; arrived on time; helped deliver the baby; cleaned the stable; made a casserole; and brought practical gifts! (Source:unk)

Let's explore this incident

After the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, astrologers from the east arrived in Jerusalem inquiring, ...

"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." MATTHEW 2:1-2

The Magi, the astrologers in Matthew's gospel, are my kind of people.
If you think this feast is about a baby shower for Jesus, you've missed the boat.

These Magi people are into some heavy-duty looking and searching.

They are on a Mission.

Who are these characters *who would follow some star across strange deserts and mountains*, enduring personal risk and unknown danger, listening to dreams and looking for signs? ***The Magi, just who are these people***

... and what are they looking for?

Originally from a *tribe of priests*, they instructed & taught the kings of Persia. *They were good and holy wise men who sought the truth.* It was their profession to watch the heavens constantly for something unusual. When they noticed some unusual event in the heavens, they believed that God was announcing something special, as if to say, ***"And now I interrupt your regular programming***

... to bring you this special announcement."

Scientifically, Astronomer Michael Molnar believes the Magi were mathematically adept astrologers. They also knew about the OT prophecy that a new king would be born of *the House of David* (Num 24:17-19). Most likely, they had been watching the heavens for years, waiting for alignments that would foretell the birth of this king.

(*The Conversation, Can Astronomy explain the biblical Star of Bethlehem, Dr. D. Weintraub, 2014, Vanderbilt University)

One star that "acted up" regularly was a star (really a planet*) named, "the Birth of a Prince." When it *acted up*, they believed that a great king had been born.

Was this the star they followed? Could that event be happening now?

The Magi were convinced that it was.

This is no sweet legend. This is one of the things that actually could have happened then. This was a time of expectation. Many people were just "chomping at the bit" for a special divinely appointed king to come. The world had begun to look intensely for God to begin a *Golden Age*. This desire was at a fever pitch.

Now, this story comes alive when you realize how intense they were

... in their search. Yes, the *Magi*, these are my kind of people!

2 They were determined that nothing would stop them from reaching their goal. They were not on some package tour. They were on a mission, an inner quest.

In *the Gospel according to Matthew* the Christ Event, the Incarnation

...*is* being presented to the Gentiles, to All the peoples of the World.

It is through a *Jewish Messiah-King* that a Universal Savior of all Nations will bring salvation to the World. **Light has shattered the Darkness!**

You can almost feel Matthew's excitement!

This day must be proclaimed. Can you hear Isaiah shouting down the corridors of time through the Scripture to *you and me*? ***“Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!***

Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines on you!

The Letter to the Ephesians says for Paul, ***“You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit...that the mystery was made known to me ...that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body,***

... co-partners in the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

We are those Gentiles, those coheirs, those copartners today.

Like Paul we are called to be ***the Stewards of God's grace,***

... the Revealers of the Mystery of the Incarnation.

Who will be the witness' of the Epiphany of Salvation today?

Are you ready to let go of your excuses & commit yourself to a spiritual adventure that takes you from the safety of *the usual & the comfortable*, to follow the ***Star of Bethlehem***. *Are you ready* to present to the Child, not the temporary gifts of ***gold, frankincense, and myrrh***, but what Jesus really wants - an all embracing love

transforming lives from *poverty, ignorance, discrimination, indifference* - into the *Father's Kingdom of Justice, Mercy, Compassion and Peace*.

Will you preach by words and deeds the unconditional love of the Father that Jesus is bringing? **Will you help to build the *eternal Golden Age*?**

Are the Magi your kind of people?

At this Christmas Liturgy of Destiny, let us recall that *Revelation* is represented by *the Star*, and we are told how great a joy that star gave to those Magi.

The whole journey that they made by the light

... of the Star was not just for that day, but for the rest of their lives.

We may have taken down the tree and put away the Magi figurines, but we cannot put away the Light of Revelation which can *shine from us* as baptized Christians. Someone we may not even know, might see that light

... and come to find out what it means.

We are the "Epiphany"

– Go out there and shine!!!