



A Celebration of Epiphany

Epiphany: Showing the Threefold Mission of Jesus



The Feast of Epiphany, which occurs on the Sunday after January 1 in the United States and Canada,

celebrates the wonder of Jesus. The word *epiphany* comes from the Greek word *epiphania*, which means “showing.” Although generally associated with the account of the magi’s search for the Christ child, the Epiphany is the second of four great manifestations of God in our midst. The first is Christmas. The third and fourth are the Baptism of the Lord and the wedding feast at Cana. God is revealed in the birth of Jesus, in the star that guides the

magi to the place of Jesus’ birth, in the dove that hovers over Jesus at his Baptism, and in the water turned to wine at the wedding feast. The symbols in these stories also show us the threefold mission of Jesus. As light to the nations, Jesus fulfills his **kingly** mission as he is honored by “wise men” who come from faraway lands. When the Holy Spirit descends upon him at his Baptism, Jesus is anointed for his **prophetic** mission. This occurs just before he begins his public ministry of proclaiming the good news to the poor. In performing his first public miracle at the wedding feast, Jesus shares his **priestly** mission by showing his power to transform the hearts, minds, bodies, and souls of those who believe.

Prayer to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Patron of the Missions

Dear Little Flower of Lisieux,

How wonderful was the short life you led. Though cloistered, you went far and wide through fervent prayers and great sufferings. You obtained from God untold helps and graces for his evangelists. Help all missionaries in their work and teach all of us to spread Christianity in our own neighborhoods and family circles.

Amen.

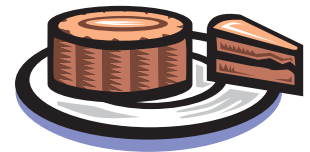


Web Watch

Find prayers and other resources for celebrating Epiphany by visiting www.webelieveweb.com.

King Cake

Some families and cultures celebrate Epiphany by baking a king cake. A bean, a coin, or a small figure is hidden in the cake, and the person who finds it is crowned king or queen of the evening. This person also leads the rest of the household in the traditional blessing of the home during which the year and the initials of the three wise men—Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar—are written on the tops of the doors with chalk. If you didn’t attend the *Gather In My Name* Epiphany event, ask your parish leader for a copy of this blessing prayer.



Supporting the Work of the Missions

The Church has traditionally used the feast of Epiphany as an opportunity to support the work of the missions. Today’s missionaries work in foreign lands and in our own country to alleviate poverty, to advocate for human rights, and to support parishes that lack adequate resources. To learn more about the work of the missions, visit the following Web sites:

- † Catholic Campaign for Human Development: www.usccb.org/chcd/
- † Catholic Extension Society: www.catholic-extension.org
- † Maryknoll: www.maryknoll.org