

## Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord - Cycle B

Sunday 7 January 2024



Readings for  
this week:

Isaiah 60:1-6  
Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6  
Matthew 2:1-12



Readings for  
next Sunday:

1 Samuel 3:3—10,19  
1 Corinthians 6:13-15,17-20  
John 1:35-42



### Liturgical Jottings

#### Epiphany in East & West

The Epiphany celebrates, in the Western churches, the adoration of the Magi from the East as the story of the revelation of the mystery of God's saving will (Eph 1:9) as embracing Gentiles as well as Jews. In the Eastern churches Christmas (January 6, an ancient date for the winter solstice) commemorates the birth of Christ and the homage of the Magi, while Epiphany marks Christ's baptism. The mystery of Christ as one sent by the Father in the Spirit to all nations and races and the essentially missionary character of the church are found in this feast. The Magi's following of the star to Christ has always expressed the longing of sages and philosophers for the fullness of truth, which only is found in full surrender to God in Christ, the Wisdom of God. The feast for Western Christians is a reminder as well a fount of the riches of worship, theology and spirituality which the Eastern churches bring to the *catholica*.

### Looking at the Readings

Isaiah passage today gives a few "epiphany moments": Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come; Lift up your eyes and look round; your heart throbbing and full. The words of the prophet are not just words of Salvation for God's chosen people but for all peoples, nations and rulers. Extending the insights from this Old Testament text to our present day we are able to confess: "Christ brings salvation not just to us, to those who come to our church, but to the whole world – to all those grumpy, depressed, selfish, worried, suffering, disadvantaged people we meet in the street, most directly to Christians of every kind, but also to those who have not yet found Jesus. The Epiphany is the time when Jesus 'went public', symbolised by the coming of the Wise Men from the East." (*Henry Wansbrough, Universalis commentary*)

A second prophet is quoted in today's Gospel by Matthew. The Prophet Micah, born in Bethlehem, spoke well of his birthplace and added: "for out of you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel." Though Micah's actual words were not *shepherd my people* but "rule over Israel" (Micah 5:2). Matthew has "updated" the prophet's words and interpreted them to describe Jesus' mission for all peoples.

### Definitions of Epiphany

This Greek word means manifestation applied particularly to the event in Matthew's Gospel of the visit of the Magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus. Christ is revealed to the Gentiles as Lord and Saviour. Some dictionaries include epiphany in a figurative sense meaning a sudden revelation, an "Aha!" moment.

### Quotes for the Day

Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies. *John Milton*

Love is the epiphany of God in our poverty. *Thomas Merton*

### Prayer for the Day


Go before us with heavenly light, O Lord, always and everywhere, that we may perceive with clear sight and revere with true affection the mystery in which you have willed us to participate. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Prayer after Communion*)

### On the Lighter Side

After the Christmas play, I asked my 6-year-old son if he remembered the gifts that the Magi brought to Jesus. He thought for a minute then said "gold, frankincense, and humour". We could all give and receive that gift!



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	<b>Those who are recently deceased and those who are grieving</b>	
	<b>For those whose anniversary occurs at this time</b>	Joe Vraca, Brian John Alexander
	<b>Our sick and their carers</b>	Jillian Taylor, Marg Normington

## Two Week Mass Timetable Week commencing 8 January

### Weekday Mass

Mon 8 January No Mass  
 Tue 9 January No Mass  
 Wed 10 January 9:15 am Mass  
 Thur 11 January No Mass  
 Fri 12 January 9:15 am Mass

### Weekend Mass

Sat 13 January No Mass  
 Sun 14 January 10:30 am Mass

### Weekday Mass

Mon 15 January No Mass  
 Tue 16 January No Mass  
 Wed 17 January 9:15 am Mass  
 Thur 18 January No Mass  
 Fri 19 January 9:15 Mass

### Weekend Mass

Sat 20 January 6:00 pm Mass  
 Sun 21 January 10:30 am Mass

## Plate Collection and Envelops

Thank you so much for your generosity and support of our Parish. May God bless you always.

**\$558.65**

## Farewell to Fr. John

Today, we bid farewell to Fr John, who has served as our parish priest for over four years. It feels like only yesterday that we welcomed him into our Sacred Heart Family. Fr John's dedication to our parish was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, where he organized weekly Mass recordings for our parishioners to participate in the service from the safety of their homes.

Fr John takes pleasure in visiting his parishioners, whether it be at their homes, in nursing homes or hospitals. The introduction of parish gatherings has allowed us to appreciate Fr John's cooking skills, as well as the delectable food prepared by our fellow parishioners. Additionally, Father John cherishes the school Masses, which allow families to come together to celebrate.

We extend our deepest appreciation for the love and dedication you have shown towards our parish. Your presence will be sorely missed. We pray for God's blessings to be with you always as you undertake your new role in Wodonga.

## Rosters

### Sunday 14 January – 10:30AM

Commentator: – Rob Miller  
 Reader: – Denice Bourke  
 Gospel Procession: - Domelina Phelan  
 Gifts: – De Lai Family  
 Special Minister: – Debbie Turvey

### Saturday 21 January – 6:00 PM

Commentator: – Carol Coulston  
 Reader: – Mary Vraca  
 Gospel Procession: - Peter Crombie  
 Gifts: – J Caifa & D Hamilton  
 Special Minister: – Not Required

### Sunday 22 January – 10:30AM

Commentator: – Debbie Worm  
 Reader: – Ross Kelly  
 Gospel Procession: - Connie Serra  
 Gifts: – D Phelan & B Miller  
 Special Minister: – Evert Worm

## Baptism



We congratulate William Elliot Dodd, son of Nicholas and Dana, on his Baptism this weekend and welcome him into our parish community.

### Acknowledgement to Country

We turn our hearts and minds to the people of the Yorta Yorta nation, who have occupied this country for thousands of year. We pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging, and commit to walking alongside First Nation Australians in truth, justice, and reconciliation.

## Thoughts for the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord

<https://young-catholics.com/>

The readings for the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord tell of the revelation of Jesus Christ to all people. The first reading tells of a light in Jerusalem which all nations are drawn to. The psalm foretells kings bringing gifts. The second reading explains how God's grace is now known to all generations and the whole world. The gospel recalls how the Magi came from afar to worship the child Jesus. It also recounts Herod's jealousy and treachery.

### A Prophetic Foreshadowing

The Feast of the Epiphany, celebrated in the Christian tradition, is deeply enriched by the prophetic words of Isaiah in the first reading. Isaiah 60:1-6 speaks of a great light that will shine upon Jerusalem, a light that will attract nations and kings. This imagery of light and glory not only embodies the physical manifestation of God's presence but also symbolically represents the dawning of a new era.

The passage foreshadows the coming of the Messiah, who will be a light to the nations. The gifts of gold and frankincense, mentioned in the prophecy, interestingly prefigure the gifts that the Magi will offer to Jesus. This connection between the prophecy and the event of the Epiphany bridges the Old Testament expectation with the New Testament fulfillment, indicating the universality of Jesus' mission. The reading from Isaiah sets the stage for understanding the significance of the Epiphany as not just a historical event but a divine appointment that fulfills ancient prophecies.

### The Mystery Revealed to All

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul speaks of a mystery made known to him by revelation – a mystery that Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and partakers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. This reading for the Feast of the Epiphany ties beautifully with the theme of universality highlighted in Isaiah and the Gospel of Matthew. It emphasizes that the salvation brought by Jesus Christ is not limited to a particular group but is available to all humanity.

This idea of inclusivity is radical, especially considering the historical context where Jewish-Gentile divisions were prominent. Paul's message in Ephesians resonates with the Epiphany event, illustrating that the coming of Jesus marks a new covenant, where the barriers of ethnicity, culture, and race are transcended. The Epiphany thus becomes a celebration of this revelation – that in Jesus, God's grace is extended to all peoples of the earth.

### A Light to the Nations

The Gospel account of Matthew for the Feast of the Epiphany is particularly striking in its depiction of the visit of the Magi. This event is not just a

## Message from Fr John

After more than four years of pure joy and absolute blessings, my last Sunday has arrived at our stunning Sacred Heart Parish in Tatura.

I am immensely grateful to all of you for your patience, kindness, friendship, and generosity towards me. As some may know, this was my initial assignment as a Parish Priest in Australia. Upon my arrival, I was welcomed with open arms and quickly embraced as one of your own. The warmth and acceptance I've experienced from this community has been truly heartening.

I hold dear the openness you shared with me, allowing me to be a part of your lives. From the celebrations of baptism, weddings, first reconciliation, first eucharist and confirmations, to the solemn moments of praying by the bedside of a loved one and anointing them with the soothing oil of God's tenderness, and even the heartbreak of laying a loved one to rest in the hope of eternal life – these experiences have truly touched my heart.

Please know that you are all in my prayers, and I pray that God continues to bless you. I have truly been blessed to be part of this parish - thank you

*Fr John Paul Pasala*

narrative about wise men from the East bringing gifts to a newborn king; it is a profound theological statement about Jesus' role as the Messiah for all people. The star that guides the Magi symbolizes the divine light leading the nations to Jesus. In contrast to the powerful and paranoid King Herod, the infant Jesus embodies a different kind of kingship – one that is humble, vulnerable, and yet, paradoxically, a threat to the established political power.

Matthew's account, unique among the Gospels, emphasizes the universal scope of Jesus' mission. While some scholars suggest that Matthew may have embellished this story to highlight Jesus' role for the Gentiles, the absence of contrary evidence gives this narrative a significant place in Christian theology. It illustrates that from the very beginning, Jesus' life and mission were marked by miraculous signs that pointed beyond the boundaries of Israel to the wider world.

The stark contrast between Jesus and Herod in this account is also noteworthy. Herod's reaction to the news of a newborn king – a brutal decree to murder male children – starkly contrasts with the innocence and helplessness of baby Jesus. This juxtaposition sets the tone for Jesus' ministry, where he consistently challenges and redefines the concept of power and authority. The Epiphany, therefore, is not just about the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles but also a revelation of the nature of God's kingdom – a kingdom where the last are first, the humble are exalted, and true power is found in love and vulnerability.