

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Sunday, the Universal Catholic Church celebrates the revered Feast of Epiphany. The word *Epiphany* in Greek means “appearance” or “manifestation.” The Church uses it on many occasions when describing prominent Christological events: how the angels reveal Jesus to the shepherds, the mysterious visit by the magi to the infant Jesus, later in the synagogue at Nazareth [as we heard last Sunday] when Jesus reveals himself as the promised Messiah, at the baptism in the Jordan and further along in Cana where he displays his Divinity by transforming water into wine. These multiple revelations are all central to the Feast of the Epiphany.

In our first reading, Isaiah prophesies that the nations of the world will travel to the Holy City following a brilliant light, bringing gold and incense to herald a priestly ministry. Magnifying Isaiah’s light-filled lyrics in the second reading, St. Paul expresses God’s newly revealed plan in clear terms to the Church in Ephesus: “the Gentiles are...copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.” St. Paul thus straightens the out-of-date beliefs from the Jews that salvation belongs only to the Jews.

The Gospel continues this thesis by reminding us that if God permitted the Magi – foreigners and pagans – to recognize and give Jesus proper respect as King of Jews, we should know that there is nothing in our sinful lives that would keep God from bringing us to Jesus. We see three groups of people reacting to Christ’s birth: the first group led by King Herod tries to eliminate him. The second group, priests and scribes, ignore him. The third group, represented by the shepherds and the Magi, come to adore him.

Anyone can become a Magi by worshiping Jesus deeply at Mass with the gold of our finest love, the myrrh of our humility, and the frankincense of our adoration. Another meaningful way is by choosing a new direction within our lives, (like the Magi’s choosing another route homewards); there is not a moment when Our Lord is not inviting us to leave behind proud and impure thoughts, selfish and immoral behavior, and to follow Him. We may also choose to become the star in guiding others to Jesus, as the star led the Magi to Bethlehem and the newborn babe.

Our journey is no less certain than that of the Magi, but clearly, they too were seeking an Answer to their questions. Knowing full well who they discovered and even what they presented to our Lord, we too might ponder what *we* can offer Jesus in this early New Year; perhaps our inherent and hidden capacities and skillset: the grace filled offering of a deeper friendship with God, and even a timely forgiveness towards a brother or sister. May this exalted feast of God’s “manifestation” increase our determination to find God’s answers for the difficulties in our lives as we continue to keep His peace before us. Amen.

HAPPY SUNDAY!