

# Radiant Manifestation

## I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

### FIRST READING (Is 60:1-6)

#### *Imperatives*

<sup>1</sup>\* Arise! **Shine**, for your **light** has come,/ the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you./ <sup>2</sup>Though darkness covers the earth,/ and thick clouds, the peoples,/ Upon you the LORD will **dawn**,/ and over you his glory will be seen./ <sup>3</sup>Nations shall walk by your **light**,/ kings by the **radiance** of your **dawning**./ <sup>4a</sup>Raise your eyes and look about;/ they all gather and come to you—/ Your sons from afar,/ your daughters in the arms of their nurses./

#### *Consequences/results*

<sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be **radiant**,/ your heart shall throb and overflow./ For the riches of the sea shall be poured out before you,/ the wealth of nations shall come to you./ <sup>6</sup>Caravans of camels shall cover you,/ dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;/ All from Sheba shall come/ bearing gold and frankincense,/ and heralding the praises of the LORD.

**THE FOCUS: Light/Radiance**

### COMMENTARY

- Our Reading, in poetry, comes from the Trito-Isaiah (56-66), written after the Babylonian Exile, addressed to the people of Zion (Jerusalem).
- Light is a powerful imagery that provokes hope and welcoming attitude.
- Christian interpretation refers light to Jesus.
- The coming of the light gathers together peoples, nations, sons and daughters in one place. (All are united at the coming of the light of God.)



- Results from listening to the imperatives of the prophet (vv.5-6): you shall be radiant; your heart shall throb, overflow; riches of the sea, wealth of nations be yours; caravans shall fill you, dromedaries; all from Sheba come bearing gold and frankincense.

### REFLECTIONS

We cannot always describe God's actions upon us, in plain language; the author uses poetic language. Poetic language stirs the heart and imagination; it speaks more.

The text calls for rejoicing, for participation, for gathering. It asks for convergence of peoples into this one light.

### SECOND READING (Eph 3:2-3, 5-6)

<sup>2b</sup>... You have heard of the **stewardship**\* of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, <sup>3c</sup>[namely, that] the **mystery**\* was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly earlier., <sup>5d</sup>**It** was not made known to human beings in other generations as **it** has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, <sup>6e</sup>that

the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**THE FOCUS: The Mystery (secret) which is now revealed to All**

### COMMENTARY

- First it was only Paul to whom God revealed this mystery. Now it is also revealed to the apostles and prophets (v.5).
- The revelation is that the **Gentiles** (non-Jews) are also coheirs copartners (v.6).
- Those privileges are no longer monopolized by his fellow Jews.
- God embraces everyone (Jews and Gentiles).
- In Jesus, there is a place for everyone.

### REFLECTIONS

God reveals himself, through his Son, to everyone.

God reveals not only to Paul, but also to apostles, prophets and Gentiles.

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### GOSPEL READING (Mt 2:1-12)

#### *The magi*

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,\* behold, **magi** from the east arrived in Jerusalem, <sup>2a</sup>saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? **We** saw his star\* at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

#### *King Herod*

<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.\*

#### *Chief priests and scribes*

<sup>5b</sup>**They** said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: <sup>6</sup>“And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,/ are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;/ since

from you shall come a ruler,/who is to shepherd my people Israel.””

#### *Herod*

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the **magi** secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance. <sup>8</sup>He sent **them** to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When **you** have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”

#### *The magi*

<sup>9</sup>After **their** audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that **they** had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>**They** were overjoyed at seeing the star, <sup>11\*</sup> “and on entering the house **they** saw the child with Mary his mother. **They** prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then **they** opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, **they** departed for **their** country by another way.

**THE FOCUS: The coming of the Magi.**

### COMMENTARY

- The text is peculiar to Matthew.
- Take note of the appearance of characters and what they particularly do:
  - **Magi**- They looked for Jesus, to do homage (v.2). They follow the guiding star (v.9). Overjoyed at seeing the star (v.10). Prostrated, did him homage (v.11). Opened gifts (v.11). They returned another way (v.12).
  - **Herod**- Troubled at the news (v.3). Assembled experts (v.4). Sends magi to Bethlehem (v.8). Pretends to be interested
  - **Experts**- Rightly quote Micah (v.5).
- The magi exhibit their interest in encountering Jesus. They travel far and wide. They search for signs. They even stumbled at King Herod.
- King Herod is disturbed at the inquiry of the magi (where is the newborn king?) He

does not expect to be dethroned soon. He misinterprets the kingship of Jesus, at this early stage.

- The author uses the two main characters to portray different attitudes towards the birth of Jesus.

## REFLECTIONS

Through a star, God guides his people to draw close to his Son.

We can find Christ if we search for Him.

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## II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY

Begin by reminding the congregation that today we celebrate the feast of the manifestation of our Lord Jesus. Discuss the meaning of Epiphany.

Jesus manifests himself to us, not only to the Jews, to Mama Mary and to Joseph, but to all people who laboriously and humbly approach him and recognize him as Savior and King.

Jesus' manifestation fulfills the prophecy of old as indicated in the First Reading: all nations gather together, all peoples see the light.

In the Second Reading, Paul testifies that now God reveals to all men and women what he has kept secret from of old. No one is excluded from God's revelation and mysteries.

The Gospel Reading portrays how Jesus manifests himself. He allows himself to be visited by these unknown foreigners. The magi represent the nations and peoples who are searching for God, for a King. After encountering Him in Bethlehem, they go back to their own lands, taking another path.

You may ask the congregation the following questions: Are you searching for Jesus? Do you think you have found him? What are your gifts

to him? Are you happy with him? Is there any change in your ways and lifestyle after having found him?

Let us not fool ourselves by believing that we have found Jesus, we know him totally.

Christian life is a continuous search for Jesus.

Christian life is a continuous journey towards God, a continuous discernment and struggle to find him.

We do not fully know him yet. We come to know him better by reading the Gospels, reflecting on his teachings, listening and fulfilling the teachings of the church. We encounter him in the poor and the destitute. We come to know him better in our prayerlife. Through prayer and sacraments, we encounter him face to face. But though we come to know him more by our efforts and by his grace, Jesus remains a mystery. We must live in his mystery.

Jesus manifests himself in these ways: through the Gospels, Sacred Scriptures, in the church, family, events, in the poor, in the sacraments.

-Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM

## III. OUR CONTEXT

1. Today is *Pro Negritis Sunday*. All collections of the masses during the day and the evening before go to Rome for African Missions. What does this tell us of our mission as a church?
2. Can you accept that you are a gentile? What does this require of us in the way we treat others? (HM)