

Worship for the Feast of Epiphany

(Observed on Sunday, Jan. 3, 2020)

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Hymn: *“Now sing we, now rejoice”* *In dulci iubilo* c. 1300 Author unknown Tr. Arthur T. Russell

1 Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth
Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth
The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art!
Thou my Savior art!

3 Now thro' His Son doth shine
The Father's grace divine.
Death o'er us had reigned
Thro' sin and vanity;
He for us obtained
Eternal joy on high.
May we praise Him there!
May we praise Him there!

2 Come from on high to me;
I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit,
O pure and holy Child;
Thro' Thy grace and merit,
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee!
Draw me unto Thee!

Invocation

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. +

Confession

Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You, that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Then the Minister shall say: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given His only-begotten Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in

His Name, He gives power to become the sons of God, and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all. Amen.

Psalm: Psalm 50 A Psalm of Asaph.

1 The Mighty One, God, is the Lord; He has spoken and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. 3 Our God will come, and will not keep silent; a fire consumes before Him, and a strong tempest is around Him. 4 He calls to the heavens above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: 5 "Gather My faithful ones together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." 6 The heavens will declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. *Selah* 7 "Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, even your God. 8 I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or for your burnt offerings that are continually before Me. I will take no young bull out of your house, nor male goats out of your folds. 10 For every wild animal of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know every bird of the mountains, and the creatures that move in the field are Mine. 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? 14 Sacrifice a thank offering to God, and pay your vows to the Most High, 15 and call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me." 16 But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth? 17 You hate instruction, and cast My words behind you. 18 When you see a thief, you are pleased, and have a share in those who commit adultery. 19 You let loose your mouth to evil, and your tongue is bound to deceit. 20 You sit and speak against your brother; you accuse your own mother's son. 21 These things have you done, and I kept silent; you thought that I was indeed like you; but I will reprove you and make a case before your eyes. 22 "Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: 23 Whoever sacrifices a thank offering glorifies Me and makes a way; I will show him the salvation of God."

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us. Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You, for Your great glory. O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. You who take away the sin of the world, receive our prayer. You who sit at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For You only are holy; You only are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Catechism Lesson

157. Whose own have you become by the redemption? Christ has redeemed me, purchased, and won me, so that I am now His own, and He is my Lord.

296) Rev. 5:9. *You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.*

297) Isa. 53:11. *He shall see of the anguish of his soul and be satisfied. By his knowledge My righteous servant shall justify the many, for he shall bear their iniquities.*

Old Testament: *Isaiah 60:1-6*

1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. 2 For the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall rise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. 3 The nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather themselves together; they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried at your side. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart shall thrill and rejoice because the abundance of the sea shall be converted to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. 6 The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense and shall bear good news of the praises of the Lord.

Epistle: *Ephesians 3:1-12*

1 For this reason I, Paul, am the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. 2 You may have heard of the administration of the grace of God which was given me for you, 3 how by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I have written briefly already, 4 by which, when you read it, you may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, 6 how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel. 7 Of this I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the incomprehensible riches of Christ, 9 and to reveal for all people what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, 10 so that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He completed in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Gospel: *Matthew 2:1-23*

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is He who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him." 3 When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of

the people together, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote: 6 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are no longer least among the princes of Judah; for out of you shall come a Governor, who will shepherd My people Israel.'" 7 Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, carefully inquired of them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, so that I may come and worship Him also." 9 When they heard the king, they departed. And the star which they saw in the east went before them until it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with great excitement. 11 And when they came into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 But being warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route. 13 Now when they departed, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word. For Herod will seek the young Child to kill Him." 14 When he rose, he took the young Child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod, to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was utterly furious and sent forth and killed all the male children who were in Bethlehem and the surrounding region, from two years old and under, based on the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet: 18 "In Ramah a voice was heard, grieving and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are no more." 19 But when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." 21 And he rose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus reigned in Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Nevertheless, being warned by God in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Apostles' Creed

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn: "The star proclaims the King is here" Author: Caelius Sedulius

The star proclaims the King is here;
But, Herod, why this senseless fear?
He takes no realms of earth away
Who gives the realms of heav'nly day.

The wiser Magi see from far
And follow on His guiding star;
And led by light, to light they press
And by their gifts their God confess.

Within the Jordan's crystal flood
In meekness stands the Lamb of God
And, sinless, sanctifies the wave,
Mankind from sin to cleanse and save.

At Cana first His power is shown;
His might the blushing waters own

And, changing as He speaks the word,
Flow wine, obedient to their Lord.

All glory, Jesus, be to Thee
For this Thy glad epiphany;
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Ghost forevermore.

Sermon

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him. ..." Matthew 2:1-2 (read verses 1-23)

Once again, through the recounting of the Scriptures, we have heard of the birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem of Judea. God the Son was made true man, born of a virgin, and laid in a manger. An angel told the shepherds in the field nearby that this Child was none other than the Savior of the world, the Messiah and Jehovah God Himself!

Wise men (and the Bible doesn't tell us their names or how many) from a land or lands east of Judea learned of the Messiah's birth through the appearance of a star and traveled a great distance to come and worship this newborn King and bring Him costly gifts.

In Numbers 24:17, it was prophesied through Balaam the prophet: "I will see him, but not now; I will behold him, but not near; a star will come out of Jacob, and a scepter will rise out of Israel, and will crush the borderlands of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."

And in Isaiah 60:1-6, we heard: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall rise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. The nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather themselves together; they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried at your side. Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart shall thrill and rejoice because the abundance of the sea shall be converted to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your land, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense and shall bear good news of the praises of the Lord."

When they arrived in Jerusalem, King Herod was troubled at their quest and inquired of the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah was to be born. They rightly understood the Scriptures and quoted from Micah 5:2, pointing out that Bethlehem was to be the place of Messiah's birth.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, although you are small among the tribes of Judah, from you will come forth for Me one who will be ruler over Israel. His origins are from of old, from ancient days" (Micah 5:2).

But what happened after this? The wise men continued on their journey and were led by the star to Bethlehem and to the very house where Jesus was. There they worshiped Jesus and offered Him gifts.

Herod the king felt threatened by the birth of the Messiah and sought to kill Him and prevent Him from reigning upon the throne of David.

The chief priests and scribes knew the Scriptures and could tell Herod where the Messiah was to be born, but nowhere do we ever hear of their traveling to Bethlehem to worship their newborn Savior and King.

The question today is: “What about you?”

You have heard of His birth and know of His sufferings and death for your sins (and the sins of the world) and of His glorious resurrection. You have heard God’s offer of mercy and forgiveness to all who repent and look to Jesus in faith for pardon and life eternal. How do you respond?

- Do you reject Jesus and try to silence those who would speak to you of Him because Jesus is a threat to you and to your way of life?
- Do you know all the facts about Jesus and His redemptive work but still fail to come and bow before Him and give Him your praise and worship?
- Or, like the wise men of old, do you follow the star (hearing and believing what the Holy Scriptures say of the Christ Child) to find Messiah Jesus and worship your God and Savior, presenting Him with the costliest of gifts — even your very selves?

O dearest Jesus, You are the Almighty God and our Maker. We thank You for taking on flesh and blood and coming into this world to redeem us from sin and death. We praise You and give to you our treasures and our lives. Amen.

Votum (Philippians 4:7)

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Offertory (Psalm 51:10-12)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your willing spirit.

General Prayer

Almighty and most merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: We give You thanks for all Your goodness and tender mercies, especially for the gift of Your dear Son, and for the revelation of Your will and grace: and we beseech You so to implant Your Word in us, that in good and honest hearts we may keep it, and bring forth fruit by patient continuance in well-doing.

Most heartily we beseech You so to rule and govern Your Church universal, with all its pastors and ministers, that it may be preserved in the pure doctrine of Your saving Word, whereby faith toward

You may be strengthened, and charity increased in us toward all mankind.

Grant also health and prosperity to all that are in authority, especially to the president and congress of the United States, the governor and legislature of this state, and to all our judges and magistrates; and endue them with grace to rule after Your good pleasure, to the maintenance of righteousness, and to the hindrance and punishment of wickedness, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

May it please You also to turn the hearts of our enemies and adversaries, that they may cease their enmity, and be inclined to walk with us in meekness and in peace.

All who are in trouble, want, sickness, anguish of labor, peril of death, or any other adversity, especially those who are in suffering for Your name and for Your truth's sake, comfort, O God, with Your Holy Spirit, that they may receive and acknowledge their afflictions as the manifestation of Your fatherly will.

And although we have deserved Your righteous wrath and manifold punishments, yet, we entreat You, O most merciful Father, remember not the sins of our youth, nor our many transgressions; but out of Your unspeakable goodness, grace and mercy, defend us from all harm and danger of body and soul. Preserve us from false and pernicious doctrine, from war and bloodshed, from plague and pestilence, from all calamity by fire and water, from hail and tempest, from failure of harvest and from famine, from anguish of heart and despair of Your mercy, and from an evil death. And in every time of trouble, show Yourself a very present Help, the Savior of all men, and especially of them that believe.

Cause also the needful fruits of the earth to prosper, that we may enjoy them in due season. Give success to the Christian training of the young, to all lawful occupations on land and sea, and to all pure arts and useful knowledge; and crown them with Your blessing.

These, and whatsoever other things You would have us ask of You, O God, grant unto us for the sake of the bitter sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

We join in the prayer that our Lord Jesus taught us to pray ...

Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. **Amen.**

Benediction (Number 6:24-26)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

Hymn: *"Songs of thankfulness and praise"* Author: Christopher Wordsworth

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
and at Cana, wedding guest,
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Sun and moon shall darkened be,
stars shall fall, the heavens shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
all will see his glorious sign;
all will then the trumpet hear,
all will see the Judge appear;
thou by all wilt be confessed,
God in man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy Word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany;
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.