

THE PARISH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

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*We saw his star in the East
and have come to worship Him*

CELEBRATING EPIPHANY

By Catherine Doherty

We would like to share with you some customs we traditionally celebrate on the feast of Epiphany, the arrival of the Three Kings in Bethlehem, to the delight of our visiting friends. These traditions come from Europe. Epiphany was traditionally celebrated on January 6, and is sometimes called Star Christmas, or Little Christmas. It is one of the oldest Christian feasts, and was originally considered as the day of Christ's birth; it is still celebrated that way by many Eastern Christians.

Epiphany is a word that means 'manifestation,' showing forth, or making visible. It manifests the divinity of Christ, the showing forth of God. The event most commonly associated with the feast of Epiphany is that of Christ's being 'made visible' to the Magi, the Wise Men who followed a star to the cave at Bethlehem, to find there the newborn Christ and do him homage. The visit of the Magi is found in the second chapter of the Gospel by Matthew:

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the East asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief

priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'At Bethlehem...' The wise men set out, and suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh...

Because of their three gifts for the Christ Child, tradition has it that the Wise Men were three in number, and of kingly origin. So they are often called the Three Kings.

These are three Epiphany customs that we celebrate in our Madonna House communities:

- ✘ the blessing of the lintels of the main doors;
- ✘ the Epiphany cake or bread with the three hidden coins;
- ✘ the distribution of spiritual 'gifts' to each family member and guest, usually done by someone dressed up in a costume that calls to mind the Three Kings.

The first custom, the blessing of the doorway, is usually done just before a meal, while all are gathered around, by the head of the family. A piece of chalk is first blessed with holy water, or simply with the sign of the cross. Then on the door frame above the main door, an inscription is made with the chalk to look something like this:

20 + C + M + B + 19

The year (here, 2019) is separated with the letters C, M, B, which are interspersed with small crosses. The letters stand for

the Latin phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, "May Christ bless this home," though many people also interpret these letters as the initials of the names of the three Wise Men or Holy Kings, traditionally known as Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar.

God's blessing is then asked upon all who abide in this home and who pass through its doorways. The following prayer may be said:

O Blessed Trinity — God our Father, Jesus Christ his beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit — hear the intercessions of Blessed Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and of all the saints on our behalf. We come before You today to dedicate our home to You. Make it a dwelling place of your mercy and peace. Give to those who pass through the doorways of our home an awareness of your presence within their hearts. Bless their coming in, and

their going out. Watch over them, wherever they may journey. Amen.

The second custom, the Epiphany coffee cake, is usually incorporated into breakfast that day. The cake or bread is round and may be decorated like a king's crown. Hidden inside the cake are three bright shiny coins (which have been washed and boiled in water for five minutes to sanitize them). The coins may be substituted by nuts or whatever one's ingenuity comes up with. As the cake is eaten, three family

members or guests will eventually find one of the tokens. Then sometime during the day each of these privileged persons will pray some special prayer for the whole family, perhaps the rosary or simply the Lord's prayer. At Madonna House each of the three persons spends an hour in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, since adoration is a keynote of the Epiphany feast: the Magi came to adore Christ.

We usually do the third custom at the evening meal. Just after desert has been served, someone (or three persons, if the group is larger) dressed in an imaginative kingly robe comes around the supper table with a tray of spiritual gifts. Ahead of time, a family member has cut colored paper or cardboard into the shape of crowns, stars, camels or whatever imagination suggests. On each card has been written a word or phrase, taken from a list which may include virtues or qualities of soul like the following: joy, peace, patience, cheerfulness, gratitude, perseverance, thoughtfulness, faith, simplicity, faithfulness, hope, generosity, confidence in God. The 'king' lets each person pick out a gift, from the many that are available, but without the person looking to see what is on the card; not trying to choose a particular 'word' for oneself. Throughout the remainder of the year, everyone tries to exercise his or her gift in daily life.

We might mention the symbolism of the gifts brought by the Magi. Gold signifies the kingship of Christ; frankincense (meaning pure incense) signifies Christ's office of high priest; and myrrh signifies his burial (since it was used in embalming at the time of Christ). Christ our king, as high priest offers his sacrificial death for our salvation.

—Adapted from *Donkey Bells: Advent and Christmas* by Catherine Doherty





Monday January 7

12:05 pm † David La Plante
requested by his aunt, Margaret Horvath

Tuesday January 8

12:05 pm

Wednesday January 9

12:05 pm

Thursday January 10

12:05 pm

Friday January 11

12:05 pm † Deceased members of Friends of Suffering
Souls & the Holy Souls in Purgatory
requested by Arthur Tanaka

Saturday January 12

9:00 am

5 pm † Hubert & Hazel Pereira
requested The Pereira family

Sunday January 13

The Baptism of the Lord

9 am † Alberto Galase Jr
requested by the Galase family

11 am For the People of the Parish

OUR PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY

We are in need of at least 15 more families to sign up in order to arrange another photo shoot for our Parish Directory. Please consider supporting your parish in this endeavour.

You will receive a free 8"x10" portrait and a parish photo directory for your time and effort. It will be impossible to put a parish directory together without your cooperation.

Please contact Alice Warford at the Parish Office for more information. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.



The Epiphany points the way toward life.

Today the Church celebrates the Epiphany of the Lord: the manifestation to the Gentiles [in the persons of the Magi] of the life of God himself. God, who in the person of Jesus, shared in our humanity in order to allow us to share in his divinity forever. Like the Magi, each person's journey to Christ has its own direction and trail; and for each who pays Christ homage and offers the treasures one holds, the reward is the same: a path away from the dangers of sin and death and toward life.

DEADLINE FOR SACRAMENTS REGISTRATION

Registration for First Communion and Confirmation is now open. Registration forms are available at the back of the Church. All completed forms can be placed in the collection basket or dropped off at the Parish Office.



Classes will begin in January and all completed forms must be received no later than January 9th, 2019.

DAILY READINGS ONLINE

Parishioners throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto can now find the Canadian daily readings on their archdiocesan and parish websites.

Working with our publishing partners at Living with Christ/Novalis, the Archdiocese of Toronto has been able to include this new feature on the www.archtoronto.org website and all parish websites within the archdiocesan website network. There are currently 159 parishes in the network.

Securing access to these online readings for the day – including the First Reading, Second Reading (when appropriate), Psalm and Gospel Reading – is significant because the vast majority of daily readings found online are from the United States Lectionary. There are some key differences between the American and Canadian Lectionaries in translations, the arrangements of some readings and feast days, as well as some differences in the instructions for readers. By partnering with Living in Christ, we are ensuring website visitors will find the same readings they would hear in their local parish Mass.

The Daily Readings tab can be found under the **Our Catholic Faith** drop-down menu on the archdiocesan and parish websites within the www.archtoronto.org network. Check out our website at:

www.immaculateheartofmarysc.archtoronto.org

music at the 11 am Mass

Opening: #547 We Three Kings
Offertory: #552 What Child Is This
Communion: Night of Silence/Silent Night (choir only)
Closing: #518 Joy to the World

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