

Encountering THE SEASON

Christmas for the Family

The Epiphany of the Lord (C)

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

Dear Family:

Read the reflection about God's invitation and discuss the "Ponder and Pray" questions and prompts, thinking about how Our Lord is calling you to act. Then consider the challenges of the "Live It" section, have fun with the family activities, and dive into the *visio divina* prayer exercise.

All Are Invited

The magi, like the shepherds, are evidence that God invites *everyone* to encounter him. From rich royalty to humble servants, all are welcome to be a part of God's family. In addition to their royalty, the magi were Gentiles. This means that at the time of Jesus, they were considered to be outside the family of God. But with Jesus, everything changes. The arrival of the magi shows us that with Jesus, *all*, regardless of their beliefs or social status, are invited into the love of Christ. All are called to be saints. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Though technically, they were not a part of God's Chosen People, the magi allowed Jesus to change their lives, and they played a part in protecting Jesus by following God's will. After they paid homage to Jesus, they decided not to go back to King Herod but returned home another way. In this way, they did not allow King Herod to hurt Jesus, but instead protected the baby Jesus by listening to the voice of God.

“ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ”

—Matthew 2:11



Adoration of the Magi by Mike Moyers

Ponder and Pray

- How can I be more welcoming to others, both in my faith and day-to-day life?
- How do I show others that I worship Jesus through my daily actions?
- Does my life reveal the all-encompassing love of God? Do I make an effort to love everyone in my life regardless of who they are?

Live It

The wise men listened to the voice of God and thereby protected Jesus. Small actions can have a huge impact on other people's lives. Throughout this week, when you feel God asking you to do something, whether it be prayer, action, or remaining still, make a special effort to say yes to what he asks of you.

Visio Divina

Take a few moments to study this week's image of the three wise men making homage to Jesus. Ponder what the image is communicating beyond the parts of the painting. Then prayerfully read these questions, asking God to illuminate your mind to all he wishes to say to you through this image.

Question 1:

What do you think Mary and Joseph thought when three kings appeared to visit their family?

Question 2:

Where is your eye drawn first as you look at this image? What feelings does this painting evoke?

Fun For the Family

*(From Rejoice and Be Glad!
A Journey through Christmas with
the Holy Family)*

There are a lot of old Epiphany traditions! Two of them involve cake. It is a tradition in New Orleans to make King Cake for the Epiphany and bake a tiny statue of baby Jesus into it. Whoever finds Jesus is the "winner" and gets a little gift! Another variation of this tradition is to bake a cake with three uncooked beans inside. The individuals who get the three beans dress up as the three wise men, and the rest of the family serves them like royalty at dinnertime.

For free videos and downloadable resources featuring *Rejoice & Be Glad! A Journey Through Christmas with the Holy Family* with Fr. Mark Toups, scan this code with your camera.

