Saint Francis Chapel
Staffed by
The Oblates of the Virgin Mary

Encountering the Heart of Christ in the Heart of Boston

The Epiphany of the Lord — January 5, 2020
Epiphany means **manifestation** of God’s love for us. This manifestation got the attention of these magi who lived a thousand miles away.

Who were these magi? Scripture scholars say they came from Persia, modern Iraq and Iran. A large church was built in Bethlehem in the 4th century. A fresco depicted the Magi as Persians. That was fortunate since in 611 A.D. the Persians invaded Palestine and destroyed every Christian church except this one because it had the fresco of the Magi dressed as Persians.

They were seekers of wisdom; they want to know the truth. They think about important things. Pope Benedict wrote in his book, The Infancy Narratives, they were on the lookout for the true star of salvation. They were not just astronomers. They were wise men, searching for God; they loved wisdom. They were not just seeking intellectual knowledge, but they sought to understand knowledge in its fullness. They sought the Creator of creation. They represent the religions and science moving toward Christ.

Pope Benedict says in a way they are successors of Abraham who set off on a journey in response to God’s call. They are like Socrates who questioned above and beyond conventional religion toward a higher truth.

St. Matthew does not say how many there were but three have been represented in art because three gifts were mentioned. They have often been portrayed as African, Asian and European to represent all peoples; in the kingdom of Christ there are no distinctions of race and origin. In Him and through Him, humanity is united, yet without losing any of the richness of variety.

Some artists have portrayed them as representing the phases of human life - youth, maturity and old age. Each stage of life finds its true meaning walking close to Jesus.

The key point is this: the wise men from the East are a new beginning. They represent the journeying of humanity toward Christ. They initiate a procession that continues throughout history. Benedict says they represent the inner yearning of the human spirit, the dynamism of religious and human reason toward Him.

God the Father announced the birth of His Son by this sign in the sky. People were used to looking at the sky; the stars were easier to see. It caused them great joy. When they found Him they fell down and worshiped the Child as divine. The gifts are not as practical as the Holy Family would need at the moment but they reflect three aspects of the mystery of Christ: gold for a King, incense for God and myrrh for the Passion. After the Crucifixion, Nicodemus brought myrrh, among other ointments, for the anointing of His Body.

What does this feast do for us? It gives us reason to worship God with joy. It helps us to realize how very blessed we are. I do not have to buy a camel and leave my homeland, risking my life, to find the true King, Son of God. His star is right there by the Tabernacle. Instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh, He receives my prayers, sacrifices and work: my life.

The Magi found Him with Mary His Mother and so do we. She is the Star of the New Evangelization.
Feast Day: January 6

Plagued his entire life with ill health and orphaned at 12, Alfred Bessette persevered in his vocation to religious life chiefly through his devotion to St. Joseph. He joined the Holy Cross Fathers of Quebec at the age of 25 but was barely able to work at all due to his weak health. The Congregation wanted to release him but Bro. Andre, as he became known, requested and received permission to stay from the Bishop of Montreal. He became a porter at one of the local schools run by the Fathers. He requested of the Bishop permission to build a chapel in honor of St. Joseph near the school grounds. With barely any money he began with a small wood shed. Over the years as he trusted in St. Joseph and with continued support of patrons, Bro. Andre eventually built the great St. Joseph’s Oratory Basilica in Montreal. He died before seeing its completion.

Marian Title of the Month: Our Lady of Life

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life: Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born, of the poor whose lives are made difficult, of men and women who are victims of brutal violence, of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy. Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love to the people of our time. Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build, together with all people of good will, the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.

The Friends of God: St. Andre Bessette

Feast Day: January 6

My God, I offer you this holy sacrifice to recognize, honor and glorify your infinite greatness and the supreme dominion which, as the first principle and last end, you have above all created things. I give you this homage for all those who still do not know you or do not want to recognize you.

My God, my Creator, I implore you to grant me the grace of final perseverance, I know by faith that I do not deserve it, nor can I deserve it, but your Divine Son deserves it for me with so many praises, with so many wounds he shows you in his Most Holy Body, on behalf of my wounded love. Amen.

Mass Intentions This Week

Sunday, Jan. 5
8:00 AM + Charles Berestos
9:15 AM Sr. Confida
10:30 AM + Robert Malloy
11:45 AM + Mary Desesa
1:15 PM (esp.) + Consuelo Restrepo
4:00 PM + Centa Adler
5:30 PM In Thanksgiving

Monday, Jan. 6 St. Andre Bessette
8:00 AM Anita Johnston — health
12:05 PM + Pasqualle Gallo
4:45 PM + Walter Morgan

Tuesday, Jan. 7 St. Raymond of Peñafort
8:00 AM + Larry Scharver
12:05 PM + Ken O’Leary
4:45 PM + Milagros Paradela

Wednesday, Jan. 8
8:00 AM + Katherine Ann Landers
12:05 PM + Robert O’Connor
4:45 PM + Maria Carvale

Thursday, Jan. 9 St. Basil the Great & St. Gregory Nazianzen
8:00 AM Brendan Feitelberg
12:05 PM Ursula Steele
4:45 PM Lavit - Lopez Family — health

Friday, Jan. 10
8:00 AM + Thomas Decrescenzo
12:05 PM Diane Flavin
4:45 PM Cecilia Ozaeta — birthday

Saturday, Jan. 11
9:00 AM Rev. Francis J. Flynn - 50th anniv. of Ordination
12:00 PM + John J. Baxter
4:00 PM John J. Malloy
5:30 PM + Elpidea Carlos
7:00 PM (esp.) + Margarita Arboleda

Prayer Before Mass

by Ven. Bruno Lanteri
Founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

My God, I offer you this holy sacrifice to recognize, honor and glorify your infinite greatness and the supreme dominion which, as the first principle and last end, you have above all created things. I give you this homage for all those who still do not know you or do not want to recognize you.

I offer this too in thanksgiving for the benefits that I and all the world have received and will receive from your infinite goodness; in satisfaction for my sins and those of the whole world; to implore the graces that are necessary for my eternal salvation and for all mankind. Oh, my God, I offer to you the merits of Jesus Christ; grant me at this Holy Mass a profound adoration.

My God, my Creator, I implore you to grant me the grace of final perseverance, I know by faith that I do not deserve it, nor can I deserve it, but your Divine Son deserves it for me with so many praises, with so many wounds he shows you in his Most Holy Body, on behalf of my wounded love. Amen.

Marian Title of the Month: Our Lady of Life
The great mystery we celebrate on Christmas is that God has become human in his Son Jesus Christ. Miraculous and stupendous is the birth of the Son of God in his humanity. Many songs and poems have been written to celebrate that God, who cannot be contained by the whole universe, has been contained in and born from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Epiphany celebrates the “other side” of that mystery. If Christmas celebrates that God was born as a man, then Epiphany celebrates that a baby is in fact the King of the Universe.

The Wise Men from the East sought out the new born king of the Jews. By discovering Jesus the Three Kings were the first from the gentile world to see and worship the Son of God and King of Kings. God has come to fulfill his promises not just to the Jewish people but indeed to the whole world. Epiphany commemorates the event that manifested the glory of God to the whole world. The glory of God is seen on the face of the baby born in the manger. The glory of God is the fact that he has not left his people to die in their sins but has come among us to save us and elevate us to a new dignity, namely, that as God has become man we too may become as gods.

Traditionally Catholic countries have celebrated Epiphany as the beginning of the festive season of light right up till Ash Wednesday. In some countries new kings were even coronated on January 6 (the traditional day of Epiphany). Twelfth Night is a crowning moment of the Christmas season and is always celebrated on the twelfth day of Christmas, which is the vigil of the Epiphany.

One custom for celebrating the day of the kings is to make the king cake. In honor of the Kingship of Jesus and the three kings who traveled to find him, a special oval cake is made and inside the cake is hidden a bean or pea or small plastic baby. Whoever gets the slice of cake with the prize is the “king” or “queen” of the party and is celebrated as such. The king cake is a reminder that our joy, the joy of celebration and feasting, should be in the Lord and in our communion with each other through him. Gift-giving is a great way to enhance the celebration just as the kings brought gifts to the newborn Jesus.

Visit catholicmom.com for a “Catholic foodie’s” King Cake recipe.

“Where is the newborn king of the Jews.” — Matthew 2

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to receive the word of God with reverence and joy.

Notice the thoughts and emotions within you. As you prayerfully consider this passage, are you able to identify what thoughts and feelings are generated?

This is the word of God. Take time to consider it carefully. Clear from your mind all distractions. Does it bring you hope or frustration? What do the Magi mean by this? Is Jesus king of your life? Does the imagery of a king work today? Why would the Word of God use the title “king” for Jesus? Take time right now to let these words touch your heart. Might you ask Mary to help you listen with confidence to the Lord?

Ask the Holy Spirit, in your heart, to help you to apply this to your life.