

WALKING TO
bethlehem

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



FEAST OF
EPIPHANY

Gospel Reading

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'

Gospel Reading

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him."

When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.

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Gospel Reading

Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.



*And being warned in a dream not
to return to Herod, they departed
to their own country
by another way.*

- Matthew 2:12



reflection

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reflection

I have never had the occasion to reflect on the Feast of the Epiphany quite in the same way as this year. By the time you read this dear friend, we will have crossed over the threshold into 2021. If there was ever a time when we have looked forward to a new year, this would be it. As we breathe a collective sigh of relief at finally saying farewell to 2020, perhaps it is pertinent to ask ourselves what precisely we are saying goodbye to.

As Jesus says in John 16:33, "I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.", we are not promised a smooth sailing life as Christians. Indeed, it is a certain thing that

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we WILL face hard times and trials, but we are assured that we do not face them alone. Jesus assures us that He has overcome all things and offers us His peace. We have the knowledge that in our suffering, Jesus unites himself with us.

So if we cannot truly leave all troubles behind (especially those of 2020), what do we leave behind, and how does this connect to the Feast of the Epiphany? In the gospel passage you have just read, we see the 3 wise men following the Star of Bethlehem to Jerusalem in their search for the King of Kings. The wise men succeeded in their quest and came face to face with their Saviour. As they looked into the face of Jesus, they must have been struck by the

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fact that they had just met their Lord and experienced a deep conversion in their hearts. A conversion so deep, that they were able to heed the warning in their dreams and change course.

A detour on a long journey in those days, was no small feat and could have added months to an otherwise much shorter journey. However, they were filled with the conviction of what they had experienced, and they allowed it to change the course of their lives.

This passage is a powerful reminder to us of the power of encountering Jesus Christ and how He is the only one who can change

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our hearts and lives if we let Him. How much more differently would the story of our salvation have gone if the wise men had made a different decision? Perhaps as we shake off the suffering, pain, loss, and trauma of 2020, what we truly say goodbye to once again, is our broken lives before Jesus Christ.

We say goodbye to old plans, old ways, old coping mechanisms, old habits, old selves; and embrace the new creations we have become because of Jesus.

I have certainly been reminded in the past year that our best-laid plans and creature comforts are nothing more than illusions of

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control that offer a precarious sense of security that is easily shaken at the first hint of trouble.

However, the Lord has also used the experiences of forced isolation to expand my capacity for love and challenged me to not take the people in my life for granted.

I have learned that sometimes a detour could be the best thing that happens to us in our lives. What can seem like a convoluted change of route, is sometimes God's way of setting us on course to something infinitely better that ends up saving us.

So come dear friends, let us begin again.



watch and pray

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Watch and pray

Assume a comfortable position in your prayer space at home. If you do not have a dedicated prayer space, make space in your room for a candle or tealight, and a crucifix. Welcome Jesus into your space, heart, and mind.

Call to mind the detours you may have taken this year. As they come to mind, pay attention to:

- How it makes you feel
- Your reaction (are you angry, defensive, sad etc)
- How it made you feel about God

When you are ready, fill in the worksheet on the next page:

Landmarks Exercise

Answer the questions that follow honestly, and examine your willingness to identify the blessings in disguise:

Note down 3 detours that you experienced this year.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Which of these detours affected you the most, and why?

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Are you able/willing to identify the blessings in disguise? Answer yes or no, and why.

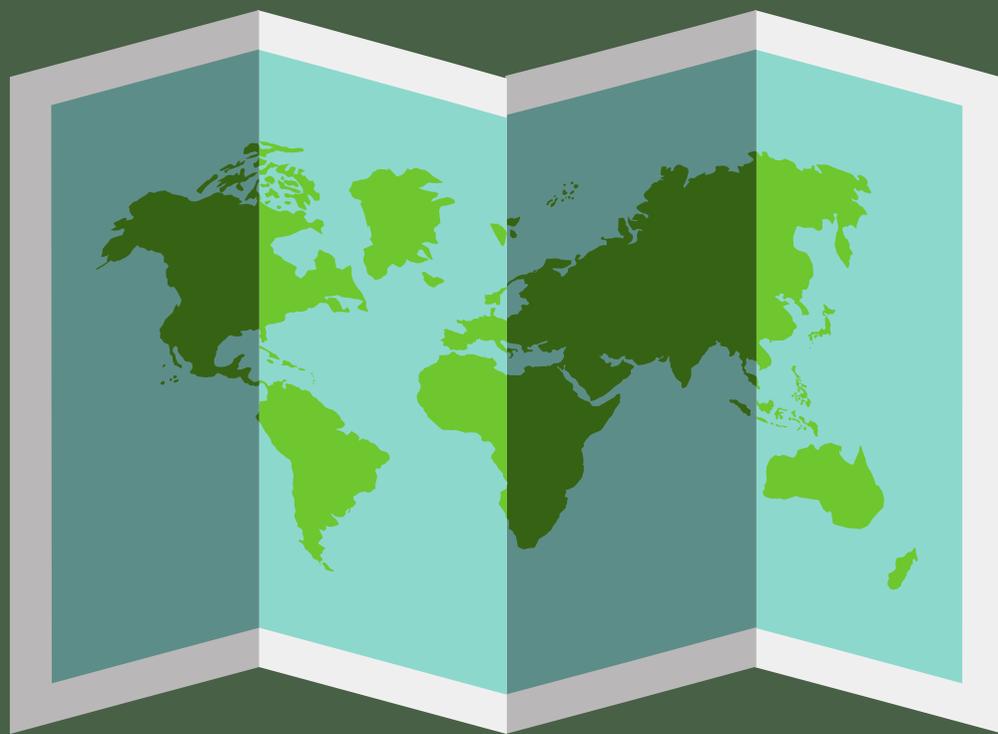
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call to action

Call to Action

Throw Out YOUR Map!



Just like the 3 wise men, we too will experience unexpected detours in our lives. We invite you to pay attention and look out for them as landmarks of God's hand at work in your life. Throw out your map, and let the Lord chart a new one for you! You can start to plot out God's map (see worksheet on next page) by marking detours as they happen. You may add notes of the unexpected blessings as a result of the detour as they happen to help you keep track.

Build God's Map

Maps are a way for us to find our intended destination. We usually consult them with a destination in mind. Instead, Let God's map reveal itself to you in His time!

*e.g. 3 Wise Men
Took a detour*



Blessings in Disguise:

- Played instrumental part in the future of Jesus' mission on earth*