

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Enlighten Us

Radiant God,
you are the source of all light and joy.
Illuminate our communities
and show us the way to live in peace
and harmony.
Shower us with knowledge of your
holy will
and grant us courage to manifest
your presence throughout the world.
Help us to bring the Good News
of your life among us
to the ends of the earth.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, January 7, 2024
Look Back, Look Forward



Today's readings: Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12. Little is known about the three visitors from the East who paid the Holy Family homage. Still we can't help but marvel at their determination to meet Jesus despite the distance and that their only guide was a star.

In many cultures, Epiphany is celebrated with as much festivity as Christmas. The day may be marked with parades, parties, gift-giving, the three kings cake, and holiday meals. Create annual traditions to make Epiphany special in your household. The liturgy offers a house blessing on this day. Inscribe 20+C+M+B24 with chalk on the door frame. It stands for *Christus mansionem benedicat*, “let Christ bless this house” and the current year. Custom

attributes the letters to the names of the three Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. Bring the figurines of the three Magi closer to the manger, light candles, and sing your favorite Epiphany and Christmas carols.

The Christmas season ends at sundown on the Baptism of the Lord. This weekend invites us to look back upon our journey since the beginning of Advent. From waiting for the coming of Christ, to welcoming him anew into our lives, and then making a permanent home for him in our hearts, we also traveled far. What new insights did you uncover along the way about the in-breaking of God into humanity? How will your faith journey bring you closer to Christ in the coming year?



THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday, January 8

The Baptism of the Lord

The Scriptures turn from Christ's infancy to his initiation and mission. At his baptism the Holy Spirit anointed and revealed Jesus as the Son of God. We are invited to ponder our baptism, which welcomed us into the community of the children of God. Pull out baptismal pictures, garments, and mementos, and recall the stories of baptisms in your family. Reach out to godparents and godchildren with a note or a call. Remember our baptismal commitment to keep the light of Christ burning brightly in our lives. *Today's readings:* Isaiah 42:1–4, 6–7; Psalm 29:1–2, 3–4, 3, 9–10; Acts 10:34–38; Mark 1:7–11.

January 9—February 13

Ordinary Time

Our six-week journey from the First Sunday of Advent to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord has come to an end, and the Church now enters the season of Ordinary Time. There is nothing ordinary about Ordinary Time. It is named after ordered or counted time. There are five Sundays, thirty-eight days of time before Lent. Change your prayer space colors to green and reflect on how you hope to grow spiritually in the not-so-ordinary weeks ahead.

Wednesday, January 24

St. Francis de Sales

St. Francis de Sales served the Church in sixteenth-century Europe with his extraordinary gifts of communication about the spiritual life for the laity. He was tenacious in evangelizing through his humility, wisdom, teaching, and eloquent writing. Some of his letters to the faithful are collected in the book *The Introduction to the Devout Life*. Francis de Sales is the patron saint of writers and journalists. *Today's readings:* 2 Samuel 7:4–17; Psalm 89:4–5, 27–28, 29–30; Mark 4:1–20.

Thursday, January 25

Conversion of St. Paul

A brilliant, highly educated Jewish Roman during the first century, Paul was converted from a zealous persecutor of the early Christians to the most prolific and compelling disciple of Christ. Without a doubt, Paul accelerated the growth of the Christian community like no other evangelist. He was beheaded in Rome for his tenacious faithfulness. Read Acts, chapters 9–28, to recall his full story. *Today's readings:* Acts 22:3–16 or Acts 9:1–22; Psalm 177:1, 2; Mark 16:15–18.

Wednesday, January 31

St. John Bosco

St. John Bosco followed his call to minister to poor and neglected youth in Turin during the early nineteenth century. His patience and compassion for children seemed limitless. He opened a church and a home and school for boys who would otherwise have been without care. He founded the Salesian order, named after his favorite saint, St. Francis de Sales, as well as an order of women to do similar ministry for girls. John Bosco is remembered as the patron saint of children. *Today's readings:* 2 Samuel 24:2, 9–17; Psalm 32:1–2, 5, 6, 7; Mark 6:1–6.

Friday, February 2

The Presentation of the Lord

Today's feast commemorates the purifying of Mary according to Jewish law, forty days after the birth of a male child, as well as the consecration of the child in the temple. This feast is always celebrated with candles (it used to be known as Candlemas) because of Simeon's recognition that in the person of Jesus, God has given us "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people, Israel" (Luke 2:30–32). Prepare a special meal, light candles for the table, and read chapter 2 of Luke's Gospel at prayer time. *Today's readings:* Malachi 3:1–4; Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Hebrews 2:14–18; Luke 2:22–40.

