

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord – January 4, 2026 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Cathedral of Saint Paul, Birmingham, Ala. – 7:15, 8:30 & 11:00am Sunday Masses – 550 words

The journey of the Magi is not unlike our weekly pilgrimage of faith. We can see signs of God all around us at all times; indeed, we should pray that we have the eyes to see his presence and action in our world – especially in others. But ultimately, we know that we must seek him out in that house where he and his mother are found. So we come to his church – every Sunday, every Holy Day, hopefully even more often as we are able – and as we enter, we do very much what they did: we prostrate ourselves (that is, we worship); we open our treasures (that is, we open our heart and soul up to God); and we offer him our gifts (which, more than the offerings of bread, wine, and money, is the offering of ourselves, continually renewed).

But we can also zoom out and see a wider movement of humanity in this great scene. The Magi were likely astrologers of the ancient Zoroastrian faith – that is, a “natural” or man-made religion. But even though they were objectively in error, yet they were open to and actively seeking the truth. Who knows if they didn’t seek to verify any number of ancient prophecies in their ongoing quest? But this one, involving the star, was real; more than that, they witnessed its fulfillment. Thus they entered into that house and encountered Jesus and his mother; they surrendered to Christ’s kingship; they were changed. How many converts down through the ages (to include many of you!) had this same journey also, and, by God’s grace, found their way – your way – to his Church?¹

Now both of these perspectives on this beautiful event that we know as the Epiphany are interconnected. Indeed, we read about this scene at the beginning of Matthew’s gospel; but the end of the same gospel, in a way, rehearses it for us. For Christ, as he ascends into heaven, teaches his disciples: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...”.² As disciples ourselves, we can relate to the Magi in our weekly, repetitive journey of faith. But that walk is not something we do alone: we are meant to zoom out, to see the rest of humanity, and to bring others in. They are not alone either – they need us.

Conversion – finding the truth and submitting oneself ever more fully to it – is the Lord’s work. But he does give us a supporting role to play as regards our fellow wayfarers, just as they have a role in our regard also. How have others edified you on your journey to Christ? How have you supported others on the way yourself? St. Paul, in the second reading, calls this role a “stewardship”: “you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit”, he says. A steward manages something that belongs to another. In what ways is the Lord asking you to be his steward? We come here, we worship, we open our treasures, we give. But then – and most importantly – he gives himself to us. And that gift is meant to be shared.

¹ Father Peter John Cameron, O.P. draws out these two interpretations in his brief commentary on the Epiphany in *To Praise, To Bless, To Preach*, Year C volume (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000), pp. 35-36.

² The Epiphany scene is recounted in Matthew 2, immediately following the narrative about the genealogy of Christ and his birth. The “Great Commission” is in the final verses of Matthew’s gospel, chapter 28.