



EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 60:1-6

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Word of God, word of life. *or* The word of the Lord.

PSALMODY: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

FIRST READING *Isaiah = eye-ZAY-uh Midian = MID-ee-un Ephah = EE-fuh*

Sheba = SHE-buh

From this side of the crèche and this side of the cross, we see the kings in Isaiah's wonderful words and can practically hear the camel bells! This reading begs for the sound of unadulterated joy!

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:1-12

A reading from Ephesians.

¹This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles,

²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you

³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,

⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.

⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:

⁶that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body,

and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant

according to the gift of God's grace

that was given me by the working of his power.

⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me

to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ

⁹and to make everyone see

what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,

¹⁰so that through the church

the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

¹²in whom we have access

in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God, word of life.

or

The word of the Lord.

SECOND READING *Ephesians = eh-FEE-zhunz*

We hear the apostle Paul celebrating the privilege of bearing the good news of God in Christ to the gentiles. The reader has that same privilege and should celebrate it in the care and spirit given to the reading. This is not an easy proposition. An excellent reading will require careful scrutiny of the text's phrases and rehearsing it aloud, more than once, in preparation for its presentation during the liturgy.

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

¹In the time of King Herod,
after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
magi from the east came to Jerusalem,²asking,
“Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?
For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.”

³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him,

⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people,
he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

⁵They told him,

“In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi
and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,

“Go and search diligently for the child,
and when you have found him,
bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out,
and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east,
until it stopped over the place where the child was.

¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped,
they were overwhelmed with joy.

¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother,
and they knelt down and paid him homage.

Then, opening their treasure chests,
they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,
they left for their own country by another road.

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL

Magi come inquiring. King Herod is frightened. He calls them secretly. He lies outright. By the end of the text, the magi are “overwhelmed with joy.” Inquiry, fright, secrecy, lies, and joy each have unique sounds. Explore them. Employ them. A significant pause between verses 11 and 12 will convey the passage of time and bring the reading to a well-rounded conclusion.