

January 3, 2016
Solemnity of the Epiphany

We are called out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-13

Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6

Matthew 2:1-12.

In the first reading Isaiah is speaking to the Israelites who are about to return home after a long exile. The Lord's glory, he says, will shine on the new Zion and upon the people. The radiance will be so great as to guide others and they will even come bearing gifts and proclaiming praises of the Lord.

Psalm 72 is a royal psalm praising the king who is graced by the Lord. He will defend the afflicted, save poor and lonely, and crush oppressors. Justice and profound peace shall flower as the Lord rules from sea to sea.

In the second reading Paul reveals the startling revelation to the Jews, namely that the Gentiles are coheirs in the promise in Christ Jesus in the gospel. This revelation comes to the holy apostles and the prophets by the Holy Spirit and was not known to previous generations.

The Gospel tells us of the magi who come seeking the newborn King of the Jews. They bring gifts and the light of a heavenly star leads them to Bethlehem where they see the child with Mary. They are warned in a dream by an angel not to return to Herod who seeks to harm the child and they heed the message.

**The Father's brightness is incomprehensible,
The Son's light shines in the darkness,
The Holy Spirit reveals the radiance of these truths.**

Light is often the symbol of God's presence and Isaiah speaks of the Lord's glory shining in radiance upon the people. In the New Testament it is the light of the star of Bethlehem that leads the magi to the newborn child. Even the infant Jesus is often shown with a halo surrounding his head. Seek the light of Christ and his enlightenment as part of your renewal.

Light

The first words attributed to God in the Bible are, "*Let there be light,*" and this first manifestation of the divine command gives to light a place of special significance in creation. Can there be any doubt that when God saw "*how good the light was,*" that God's supernatural hope permeated the creation that followed.

Light has a multiplicity of interpretations. First there is natural physical light as that of the sun. It is interesting to note that research on deep space indicates that some scientists have concluded that the stars of the universe ignited in one great burst, "as if every chandelier in a mansion were flicked on simultaneously on a moonless night." There is also metaphorical light, relating to the common usage of, "I saw the light," meaning "I now understand." When God speaks the first words (*Genesis 1:3*) and says, "*Let there be light,*" we can, in this sense, interpret it as God saying, "Let it now be understood that I Am," that, "I exist." A third kind of light is "uncreated light", the kind of manifestation we hear of in the Transfiguration or the supernatural glowing of Moses' face when he came down from the mountain after an encounter with Yahweh.

