

## Epiphany of the Lord 2021

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord, has risen upon you.” Light truly represents some of God’s most mysterious artisanship. Without delving too deep into quantum theory, light energy, is essentially electro-magnetic radiation, composed of photons, or heated atoms; it behaves as a packet or particle, but travels like a wave. We can imagine how, Isaiah metaphorically describes, the glory of the Lord, in this way. Incarnation filled the human condition, with the Author of this marvelous wonder. Stationary vegetation must have light to stimulate the process of photosynthesis. The mobile physicist seeks ways to harness its properties, and the artist, remains enthralled with its colour and beauty. But, Brothers and Sisters, there is an even higher mystery and wonder, to discover behind this amazing reality.

Isaiah reminds us to lift our gaze heavenward and to look around. The abundance of the sea shall be brought, to you. Waves after wave of mercy and love, packed into the person of Jesus, flowing from a Trinitarian ocean of wisdom! “Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice.” God’s spokespeople share these insights, not with magical powers to predict, but rather with keen perception, within the present. Albeit Isaiah hopes to stretch our attention towards someone more glorious, and well beyond full perception. Humankind has only limited language and gestures with which to communicate any amount of such sacramental perception.

Light, however, is a helpful analogy we do have, to describe Incarnation. The human condition is infused with full divinity, just as, Eucharist completes Incarnation. Many heresies emerge from humankind's difficulty balancing Jesus' two natures. Isaiah, however, has no trouble, identifying Jesus, as the First Sacrament of God. He says, "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." The wealth of the nations shall come to you, but not if a regional king has any say in the matter.

It is hard to imagine reasons, we remember Herod as anyone Great. Early biographer, Flavius Josephus, called Herod a "half Jew. Historians believe, Herod murdered one of his wives, and three of his own children, before setting his sights on Bethlehem's little ones. Sure, he constructed Massada, standing above the Dead Sea, and Jerusalem's second Temple, with its venerated western wall. But, Herod's friends were really more of a fool, because he had every chance, but made no effort to discover Jesus.

Travelers neither thought Herod was overly clever. Navigating under a guiding star, they went to pay homage, but not to Herod. They moved wisely and asked carefully for directions! Locals resident were well versed in Isaiah words, but Herod doesn't seem very familiar, with the inside of synagogue, much less anything Isaiah wrote. Herod's double talk is quickly analyzed for its deception and worthlessness.

Sadly, Christians today must execute similar maneuvers while dodging the Herod's who cross our daily paths. Such characters are difficult in the moment, but the light of baptism, easily out-shines foolishness. Herods today never find Jesus; they're just too occupied. Much less, do such individuals get their hands on Jesus, allowing powerful egos to fortify internal ignorance?

We don't need to look into antiquity to find self-serving and deception. Christians know well, whom it is we worship, and it isn't anyone the world offers. Yes, we pray and hold in respect those chosen to exercise leadership service, but worship never. Worship belongs to God and God alone. Herods are really frightened, insecure, and deceptive individuals. They can't imagine people worshiping anyone, but them. They cling to a false idea of power demonstrating no limit to the madness they will bring forward to attain and keep it. Herods are not very different from most thieves and fools, who do their work surrounded in darkness, and lies. Herod of antiquity, heard the words "King of the Jews," and panicked. He doesn't even want to meet, much less worship Jesus. He wants only to eliminate God, whom he envisions, as being a rival for his worldly throne. I suppose in fairness, it was just the early days of Jesus. However, what about today? Are there still fools attempting to eliminate God? The only greater fool would be anyone who knowingly subscribed to such liars and cheaters.

With the torch of Christ, the wise and perceptive step into a true discovery, where joy, peace, and the glory of God shines. Perceptive are Eucharistic people who exchange gifts, not schemes and trickery. They arrive on bended knee and take away only an intimate encounter with our Lord's Holy Family. They experience the epiphany of a lifetime.

Epiphanies are like shots of wisdom for the soul. People are lifted towards higher places of knowing, believing, and relating. "The soul's light brightens:" so to speak, and we understand truth, the world, and ourselves in new ways. Clarity replaces ambiguity, and "that deer in the headlights look", gives way to a smile of peace and contentment. We can never undo an epiphany. They are indelible, just like, is our baptism.

Friends, may we rise brightly in 2021, to become knowledge keepers of this renewed sacramentally perception. Moving from peripheral dimness, towards places where Jesus informs our lives. Growing into wide-awake disciples, giving evidence to the One, True, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church's sacramental wisdom. Ultimately, generating with renew attentiveness, the lasting peace and happiness so necessary to energize and brighten, a winter day.

Amen