

# THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD [C]

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
Rev. Jeff McGowan

## 1<sup>ST</sup> READING: ISAIAH 60: 1-6

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you.

## PSALM 72

Lord, every nation on earth shall adore you.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> READING: EPHESIANS 3:2-3A, 5-6

Brothers and sisters: You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace...

## GOSPEL: MATTHEW 2: 1-12

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother.

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What were the magi searching for? They said, "The newborn king of the Jews." We need to look at the story and think about it.

An English Lit professor was teaching the students to look for the Catholic symbolism in the Flannery O'Connor stories they were studying. One student spoke up and said, "How can you say that an ashtray may be symbolizing Ash Wednesday and a river may symbolize Baptism. Did it ever occur to you that you might be reading way too much into a simple story?" He must have been a freshman! There's always more to the story in good literature. That's why it is timeless.

What do you think? Are the magi looking for a newborn king? Or ought we give this more thought? Here's a riddle, "Two men fell down a chimney. One man's face got dirty and the other man's face stayed clean. Which man went to wash his face? ...At first the answer seems obvious, you'd expect the man with the dirty face to go and wash. But after thought, the man with the clean face may have looked at the man with the dirty face and decided he needed to go wash and the man with the dirty face may have looked at the other with the clean face

and thought he was clean and didn't need to wash. If we are going to understand this very interesting story, we need to think about it again and again.

I'd like to suggest that the magi followed the star looking for something more than a king. Herod knew what they were looking for; he asked his priests and scribes where the Christ was to be born. They were looking for hope in a desperate world. We have similar needs.

The cynics don't get it; they think it is a simple story about three rich guys and a baby. They don't understand why we celebrate Mass each week and more. They wouldn't leave the tv or i-pod and cross Newberry Road to come to Mass. For cynics, everything, I mean everything is a bore. A cynic has no hope.

On the other hand, we do know why we are here. Some of us arrived at church with a bounce in our step and a song in our hearts. In these days of Christmas, we find ourselves merry and joyful. This is where we find the source of all that is good in us. Others, though, had all they could do to get out of their car and walk into church. Their Christmas may be melancholy or exhausting for countless reasons. We are here and that makes us magi! Just as the magi of long ago, we seek the only one who really offers hope that energizes and empowers. If you have hope, you're more likely to participate in a recuperative process after an injury or illness. A person with hope will tolerate pain twice as long. If you have hope you are more likely to persist in school. We encounter obstacles all day long, but when hopeful people bump into an obstacle, they just generate more pathways. Our religion invites to follow the star. This is where we receive hope that is life changing and meaningful.

A columnist—and Tennessee fan-- wrote a tribute to Tim Tebow and the Gators after New Year's Sugar Bowl. He wrote, referring to last season's Ole Miss Game and this year's SEC game, that Tebow and the Gators are more interesting in their response to losses than they ever were after victories. Knowing Tebow and the Gators as we do, could there be a message there for us? We have hope. Let Jesus put that bounce back in your step. Discover your path to recovery! Throw down your defenses! The star is shining! Discover how

great your reality is! Encounter him as the magi did and be as grateful; your future is good news beyond your wildest dreams! Happy New Year!