



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Year A

Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Mathew 2:1-12

GATHERING

(A tall pillar candle and a bible opened to this week's gospel are arranged on a table in the gathering place. In addition, a substantial number of other candles, as many as may be appropriate for the space, are set out throughout the gathering place. The leader arranges with one of the member, beforehand to gradually light these candles, one at a time, throughout the course of the session.)

As we focus this week on Jesus as the light that shines for all humanity, we also encounter the revelation that as his followers we too are called to be light for the world. Last week we focused on the Holy Family and on challenges to families today. How did you live attentively to the needs of family life this past week? *(Members share briefly.)*

OPENING PRAYER

(The tall pillar candle is lit. The leader calls the community to be attentive to God's presence with them. A selection of instrumental music played. When the music is complete, the prayer continues as follows.)

All: Lord make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
And where there is sadness, joy.

O, divine master grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love
For it is in giving that we receive –
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Focus question

- ◆ What does a bright sunny day do to you?

SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

Commentary

Jesus is the light of all the nations. He came to release all of creation from the darkness of sin. Without exception, without prejudice, his light shines on the rich and on the poor, on the kind-hearted and the evil-doer. It does not distinguish color, gender or ethnicity, it knows no national borders; nor does it require visas or legal status. His light simply shines over all, with the same splendor for all.

Jesus says to us, “You are the light of the world.” (Mt 5: 14) He also exhorts us to let that light shine bright before all; that the good we do; our words, our actions, may lead others to know and praise God, the Father.

We have many opportunities to share this light of Christ in our world, especially during these times of economic uncertainty. Here, in our own country, the richest in the world, there are folks who lack even the most basic needs: food, medicine, shelter; companionship. Here among us lives an immigrant brother or sister who, not being a citizen, or perhaps for being

undocumented, suffers persecution and discrimination. There is an elderly person just around the corner who has missed many doctors' appointments for lack of transportation. Many of our youth are raised or taken by the streets, perhaps lacking a father figure, a big brother/sister, who will guide them.

Needs see no color, citizenship, gender or age. Our light needs to shine, for all and on all. Let us shine for our families, our friends, for the stranger, and especially for the one who sees us as an enemy. This is how we share Jesus' *epiphany*; this is how his light shines on the world; this is how his good news of salvation spreads.

Love, peace, hope; salvation for all creation is the message of the Epiphany of our Lord. "Rise up in splendor Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you." Let it shine; let it shine; let it shine!

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ How have you brought light to someone else's life lately?
- ◆ How has someone shared God's love with you lately?
- ◆ On what part of your life's path do you need Christ's light to shine these days?
- ◆ Mention some dark circumstance that Christ may be calling you to bring some light?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

- ◆ Reach out to neighbors close to home. Contact Catholic Charities in your diocese for ways to connect to local programs. Seek out opportunities to support recent immigrants to this country. Go to www.catholiccharitiesusa.org; click on **About** on the homepage, then click on Local Agency Directory for contact information in your area.
- ◆ Reach out to a child who needs a mentor. Explore becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister. For information and organization locations in your area, contact Big Brothers Big Sisters at 888-412-BIGS, www.bbbs.org.
- ◆ Support efforts to abolish the death penalty. You may contact the Death Penalty Information Center at www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

(The leader invites the community to a time of quiet. After a minute of silence, the gospel of the week is re-read by a member of the community. Following the reading, the leader poses this question to the community: "What does Christ say to you/us in hearing this gospel today?" The community pauses for a full five to seven minutes of prayerful attention to how Christ speaks to them in this gospel. After this time of silence, the leader invites members to simply mention a word or two or a brief thought that captures what they hear Christ saying to them. Following this sharing, the prayer continues as follows.)

All: Father in heaven,
 form in us the likeness of your Son
 and deepen his life within us.
 Send us as witnesses of gospel joy
 into a world of fragile peace and broken promises.
 Touch the hearts of all men with your love
 that they in turn may love one another.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

Alternative Prayer, Eighth Sunday in Ordinary
Time Morning Prayer, **Christian Prayer: The**
Liturgy of the Hours, p. 612.

*(Members join in singing, "Child of the Poor/ What Child Is This."
The song may be found on the Internet. When the song is complete,
members exchange a sign of peace.)*