

6.1.69  
4.1.73 ✓  
7.1.74 ✓  
9.1.75 (350 adapt)

Il est né [Jouy Heroult]

Laudario: 9

↓ (The Adoration of the Wise Men, from an old Italian Laud for the Nativity.)  
Matt 2: 1-11 (Pyc p 42)

O God, who by the leading of a star did manifest thy only-begotten Son to the nations: grant us this grace, that we who know thee now by faith may after this life, attain to the glorious vision of thy Sonhead. Though the same XI. Cl.

Thinking about what to say for today's nativity prayer for the Feast of Epiphany.

which we celebrated yesterday to end the Christmas season

I found myself recalling the first time I visited the cathedral of Chartres in France. When you first go inside, through the wonderful west portal, you're immediately over-awed by the atmosphere and colour of that warm, friendly building. All around you, in the superb stained-glass is the person of Christ - pictures of his birth & infancy and with His mother, seem to dominate, perhaps because these in particular are drawn with such simple lines and pure colour. The whole cathedral is a manifestation of Christ, making Him visible to anyone with eyes to see, showing Him and His saving work, in OT Prophecy, in His own human life, and in his continued presence in His church. And this is really what the Feast of the Epiphany is all about - what the Greek word Epiphany means in fact - the manifestation, the showing of Christ to the world into which He was born with such hidden quietness on Christmas night. Today is the second pole of the Church's Christmas season; the day, traditionally, on which the 3 wise men bringing their gifts to the Christ child, appear in the cribs in our churches. The commercial world has pretty well forgotten Christmas by now - it is in the throes of New Year sales, reorganisations, fresh stock-taking: will here & there the Christmas happenings just waiting to be taken down. For us, though, today is an important celebration

- and it's not a question of a belated completing of the Christmas crib by putting in the three wise men, as if they had arrived 2 weeks late. No; in fact, the feast has only a partial connection with the 3 Kings & their gifts - they are celebrated because they represent the 'outside' world, so to speak, for whom Jesus was born as well as for His own people. Their coming marks His being made known and manifested to the world as a whole which first came to know about Him through their visit; their gifts of gold, frankincense & myrrh are really an expression of their recognition of who His child is, His purpose. For today, we see Him as Lord of the universe, Word of God, Priest and saviour through the death He was to die. After the simplicity of His birth at Bethlehem, (today) it's the mystery & wonder of who He really is, and the calling of all nations to worship Him, that is most prominent in our celebration. Think about this quietly & prayerfully now as you listen to this South American song about the 3 Kings - a modern composition based on folk rhythms.

Toy to the World

Los Reyes Reyes (Nina Cordero) 659 Phil 0.765 25 2006

PRAYERS

(The Epiphany is the celebration of the manifesting of Christ)

Two events of His life are commemorated for their significance as well as the visit of the Magi. They are His Baptism by John, and His first miracle or sign, the changing of water into wine at Cana. Why these two, you may wonder. It's interesting that, in the Eastern Church, Epiphany is really the feast of the Baptism of Christ (wh. we in the western church keep on this day week, as a

commemoration] - and, <sup>it is of interest also that, in the western church,</sup> as I mentioned some weeks ago, the origin of the feast of Christmas is associated with the celebration of Baptism on this day. The point is, ~~if~~ you <sup>may</sup> remember, Christ's baptism in the Jordan was the occasion of a manifestation of God. St Matthew describes it: P.V.C. p. 45 n. (Mt 3:15-20).

So this was a revelation of who Christ really was - just as His power over nature at the Cana miracle also showed. The Cana miracle of course, also <sup>is</sup> a pointer to the sacrament of the Eucharist, the centre of Christian life, the which Baptism gives entrance. And that brings me back to Christmas again, for <sup>one of</sup> the best pieces of writing on the Feast of Epiphany that I know of is a sermon by W. G. of Chartres, a 12th century lawyer, writer, historian. In it, he beautifully links the birth of Christ from Mary his virgin mother at Christmas with the birth in baptism of each of us from the virgin womb of the Church, the Bride of Christ, joining us a life we share with His, reaching its fullest union in the Eucharist we celebrate together. A pity I haven't got a copy of it (it hasn't been published in English). for this is really what Epiphany is all about.

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