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# The Epiphany of the Lord

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JANUARY 7, 2024



## THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS

**First:** Isaiah 60:1-6

**Second:** Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

**Gospel:** Matthew 2:1-12

**FOCUS:** *With Christ's help, we can be his light for others.*

We are not the source of the light that a world in darkness needs desperately. Instead, we must *receive* Jesus, the Light of the World, so that we can, in turn, share it. And as we heard in the first reading: "*Then you shall be radiant ... your heart shall throb and overflow.*" Jesus has come to give all the love we need, all the wisdom called for and all the virtue necessary to be a light to others.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD:

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah promises that Jerusalem will be a light for all nations. In the Letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul explains the revelation that the Gentiles are members of the same body of Christ. In the Gospel, *Magi from the East* look for the newborn king, finally finding the child with his mother, Mary.



## MASS INTENTIONS

**5 p.m.:** Mary Jean Geidel, Richard Worthington and Christopher Martini

**10 a.m.:** Laurence O'Brien, Chris & Nic Pierce, Rosalina & Domingo Rodriguez and Jon Van Tassel



## WE ARE SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

If this happens to be your first visit to our church:

### **WELCOME!**

The faith community of St. Paul's wants you to know that no matter what your present status is in the Catholic Church; or your current family or marital situation; no matter what your past or present religious affiliation; no matter what your personal history, you are invited, welcome and respected here, at St. Paul's Church.

## GIFTS FIT FOR A KING

Although very different from the gifts that our newborns receive today, the gifts that the Magi or Three Wise Men brought to the infant Jesus hold symbolic meanings for us. Gold is equated with royalty; Frankincense symbolizes divinity; and Myrrh, humanity (or mortality). Some scholars have theorized that these gifts, particularly gold, helped Mary and Joseph pay for their escape to Egypt to flee Herod.

**Gold** may have been the first metal that human beings encountered because it can often be found in its pure, natural state - such as in a stream. People have always valued gold for its luster, beauty, malleability, and resistance to corrosion and tarnish. These attributes prompted ancient civilizations to associate gold with royalty, immortality and deity. It was first used as currency in the seventh century B.C.



Originating in Arabia and northern Africa, **Frankincense** is a dried resin from Boswellia trees used for thousands of years in perfumes and incense. It is also burned as an offering in religious rituals because it is

believed the wisps of smoke can carry prayers heavenward.

**Myrrh** is also a dried resin from Arabia and northern Africa used for thousands of years as well in perfumes and incense, and also as an antiseptic and topical painkiller. And myrrh was used in the embalming process by the Ancient Egyptians.



## WITH MUCH GRATITUDE



... for the plethora of presents – wrapped and spiritual – given to Father Sean, Deacon Carl and Deacon Michael. They continue to be touched by your kindness and generosity at Christmas and throughout the year.



... for Pam Vogt's intricate "Holiday Baskets" choreography. Armed with a clipboard, copious notes and a team of 20 volunteers, more than 150 holiday food baskets were filled, which enabled families in need to enjoy a holiday meal. Not only do these Christian Services elves fill the boxes and then work assembly-line fashion to distribute them, but they assist with shopping for the hundreds and hundreds of pounds of food. And all that food could not be purchased without your generous contributions.



...for your memorial flower donations, which covered the cost of the poinsettias, gorgeous wreaths and whatever else Anne Savistano, the new head of the Art & Environment ministry, needed to complete her vision to festively outfit the church for Christmas. Once again, the live trees in the vestibules were donated by Manza Farm & Garden Center.



...for the gift of music at the Christmas Masses, including the enthusiastic and engaging Christmas Eve Youth Choir, all under the direction of Debbe Garry.



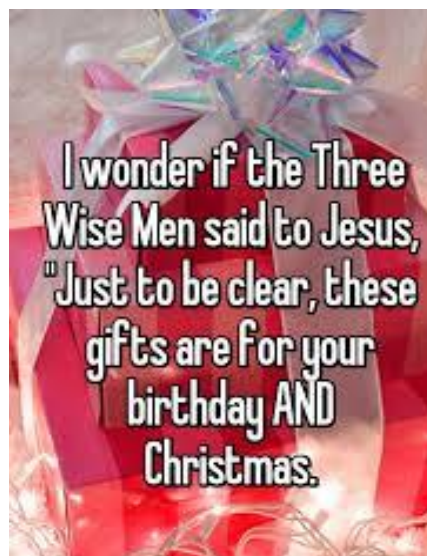
... for another inspirational Christmas Pageant. Coordinator Rebecca Suchy makes shepherding youngsters look easy! And thanks as well to our young people for their hard work and all that they bring to our Christmas celebration.



... for another successful Giving Tree, which was "live" this year for the first time since the pandemic. The 100 "angels," representing 100 children in need from St. Simon Stock parish in the Bronx and through the Department of Social Services, flew out of here in a weekend! Therese Quinn and Mary McCabe keep track of all the gifts and package them for pickup. The volume of presents under the tree – returned on time! – speaks volumes about your commitment to this holiday tradition.



... for all of you. You are the heartbeat of St. Paul's, which continues to be known for its warmth and many avenues of outreach to those in need of kindness. We're not perfect, but we're not done practicing yet, either! Happy New Year!



## CHALKING THE DOOR: AN EPIPHANY TRADITION

A practice that originated during the season of Epiphany in Medieval Europe – Chalking the Door - is still done today. Using chalk, the door to one's home is symbolically marked to ask for God's blessing upon those who live, work or visit throughout the coming year. The inscription this year would be:

**20 + C + M + B + 24**

The year, in this case 2024, is split and flanks "CMB," separated by crosses. The letters represent the initials of the Magi - Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. The letters are also found in a three-word Latin phrase, "Christus Mansionem Benedicat," which translates into "May Christ bless this dwelling."

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Regular Sunday Collection

**December 24-31: \$ 5,921.42**

Envelopes: \$ 3,099.00 – Online: \$ 2,822.42

Christmas Collection through December 31

**\$8,756.00**

(Envelopes and WeShare)

*THANK YOU!*

## LAST WEEK'S MASS ATTENDANCE

Saturday 55

Sunday – 138

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