

# Fact of FAITH

## The Epiphany of the Lord

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord is the Christian observance that celebrates the public manifestation of the Jesus' kingship to the world when the Magi visit and adore him. In the Gospel of Luke, an angel of the Lord reveals Jesus as "savior," "Messiah," and "Lord" to the shepherds when Jesus is born and laid in a manger (see Luke 2). But the visit of the Magi reveals another facet of Jesus' destiny—his kingship.

In Matthew, chapter two, the Magi announce to King Herod the purpose of their visit. Arriving in Jerusalem to seek the Messiah, they ask Herod, King of Judea, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him

homage." Departing Jerusalem and following the star's movement, they find the child Jesus and his mother, Mary, in Bethlehem. Joyfully, they prostrate themselves before the King and present to the newborn King gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Through this prophetic event, the kingship of Jesus is revealed, while the gifts brought by the Magi prophecy the type of kingship Jesus would have.

While tradition holds that the Magi were three kings or wise men, Scripture is silent on the number of kings who arrived to give homage to the Lord, as well as the background of the Magi (kings, astronomers, etc.), and their names. Nonetheless, while extensive

details are absent in Sacred Scriptures, Christian tradition holds that there were three wise men, named Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

Current tradition in the United States often sees families using chalk to mark the top of a door post of their home with the initials of the three kings and the current Epiphany year. For example, for Epiphany 2017, a family would mark "20 + C + M + B + 17." This chalking of the lintel is generally accompanied by a short ritual blessing of the house.



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