



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church Newsletter  
January 8, 2023

My Dear Parishioners,

This weekend we celebrate the great Feast of the Epiphany, which in many parts of the world is also known as Three Kings Day. In many parts of the world, this is the day the people exchange gifts, in remembrance of the gifts that the Magi brought to the child Jesus.

Much has been written about the symbolism of the gifts. The gold that was given was a gift for a King and so acknowledge the child Jesus as the newborn King of the Jews. The incense was, and is still used, for divine worship, and so the incense that was given was a gift for a priest. The myrrh was a spice that was used for embalming, and so that gift was for someone who could and would die. Together, they affirm for us that the child Jesus was in fact our True King and High Priest who would offer Himself on the altar of the Cross for the Salvation of the World.

One might ask the question “what did Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph do with the gifts?” The answer to this question is not recorded in Sacred Scripture and so is open to speculation. A good answer, though, might be that they used the gifts to finance their flight into Egypt. Which would then make the gifts not only richly symbolic but also gifts that were definitely needed by the Holy Family. God is so good! His Providence is always at work!

Of course, in our own times, the symbolic meaning of gold has changed and is now seen as a symbol of love. So, as we think of gift to give the child Jesus in union with the Magi, we can give no greater gift than the gift of our love.

Also, in remembrance of the incense that was given as the Magi adored the child Jesus, we can offer some additional time of prayer and maybe even add time of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to our schedule.

Lastly, in remembrance of the myrrh that was given, we can continue to dedicate our lives for His Glory and for the good of souls.

These would be truly beautiful gifts to offer to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Holy Family in remembrance of the visit of the Magi.

I continue to thank all of those who have made our celebrations this Christmas Season so beautiful, and I continue to thank all of you for your generosity, and I pray that you will be richly rewarded for all you have done.

In this newsletter I have included Archbishop Perez's statement on the death of Pope Benedict XVI. I have also included an article of the "Three Epiphanies" that we actually celebrate this weekend.

Lastly, our beloved Fr. Joseph Muller, MSC, has moved to Holy Family Manor in Bethlehem. I have included his address in this newsletter and, if you have a moment, please send him a card or a note reminding him that we are thinking of him and praying for him.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

Fr. Michael J. Pawelko, Pastor



Get  
well  
soon!

Cards and notes for Fr. Joseph Muller can now be sent to:

Fr. Joseph Muller, MSC  
Holy Family Manor  
1200 Spring Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18018



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December 31, 2022

Contact: Kenneth A. Gavin  
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**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP NELSON J. PÉREZ REGARDING  
DEATH OF POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI**

Along with the people of the Church of Philadelphia and the entire Universal Church, I was deeply saddened to learn of the death Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI this morning.

In the midst of great sorrow, we also reflect of the life and ministry of the Pope Emeritus with infinite gratitude. He tirelessly served the Church for over 70 years as a parish priest, professor of Theology, Archbishop of Munich and Friesing, Dean of the College of Cardinals, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Supreme Pontiff.

Recognized as a man of deep faith and keen intellect, he was a key advisor at the Second Vatican Council and for many years worked closely with Saint John Paul II during his papacy. Throughout his long life, Pope Benedict XVI was a brilliant teacher of the faith. His every action was full of courage, humility, and love for those entrusted to his pastoral care. His legacy is a profound one that leaves an indelible mark on the life of the Church around the world.

Pope Benedict XVI also directly impacted our local Church in tremendously positive ways. Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary was honored to host him in 1990 when then-Cardinal Ratzinger delivered a keynote address to the seminarians of the United States regarding the importance of priestly formation. In 2012 while serving as Pope, he selected Philadelphia to host the World Meeting of Families. That precious gift will always be remembered as a joyous occasion that brought the world to our region in an effort to strengthen the ties of family life that form the bedrock of society.

His retirement in 2013 was an unparalleled act of selflessness and a lesson in humility from which we can all benefit. Quietly and prayerfully he still continued to serve the Church until the end of his life. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has now been called home by God. His life was a gift to the world. May his example inspire all of us to serve Christ's Church on earth with joy and zeal as Missionary Disciples.

I ask the people of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to join me in offering prayers for the happy repose of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's soul. May God grant him the gift of eternal life and bring comfort to a Church in mourning.

*Most Reverend Nelson Pérez, D.D.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia*

# What Is the Feast of the Epiphany?

By Gillian Weyant - [www.coraevans.com](http://www.coraevans.com)



The feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord, celebrated on January 6th, tends to connote one thing primarily among many Catholics. Upon hearing the words “feast of the Epiphany,” many Catholics think only of the adoration of the magi after the birth of Jesus. While this event is indeed part of the celebration of the Epiphany, it is but one component of what is ultimately a much more extensive and important feast.

## What Is the Epiphany?

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (magi) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee.” In this way, the scope of the Epiphany proves to be much greater than simply the adoration of the magi.

The symbolism of the events involved in the feast of the Epiphany is rich and complex. Let’s begin with the adoration of the magi, or the three wise men.

## The Adoration of the Magi

Regarding this event commemorated on the feast of the Epiphany, it is helpful to again turn to the Catechism, which states: “In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be king of the nations.” This adoration of the magi is of immense importance, as it shows the possibility of redemption for everyone who seeks it.

The symbolism involved in the adoration of the magi has a number of layers, but the first one is relatively easy to see. The worship of Jesus by the magi shows us that Jesus’ kingship began at his birth and superseded all other earthly kinds of royalty. Though the magi are often referred to as the three kings, it is not clear that they were in fact that specific type of royalty. According to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the term “magi” encompasses a number of different meanings. In terms of their religion, it is thought that the magi were members of a Persian priestly caste. They are also thought to have been philosophers, and others say they were involved in some way with the supernatural or astrology. In spite of the variety of definitions one could apply to the term magi, it is clear that these were men who held a certain amount of power and influence in the world at that time. The fact that they embarked on a journey and ultimately bowed down at the manger of Jesus shows that the kingship of Jesus supersedes all earthly power.

The adoration of the magi also shows us how it is possible for the Old Testament to be fulfilled in the New. If the magi were indeed members of a priestly caste, it is of great significance that those priests would surrender to the priesthood of Jesus as shown in the New Testament. In this way, we can see the words of Jesus born out in this event that occurred after the Nativity, after this occurrence of the Incarnation: “Behold, I make all things new.”

## The Baptism in the Jordan

The next event commemorated is another mystery of Jesus’ public life, namely His baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist. Although John initially hesitated to baptize his cousin among the crowd of sinners present at the time, Jesus insisted and allowed Himself to be numbered among sinners. This shows His acceptance of His mission to suffer for the sake of the rest of humanity: as He is baptized in this crowd, He anticipates the death He will suffer as a result of His Incarnation. After His baptism, it is stated in the Catechism: “The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to “rest on him”. Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism “the heavens were opened” - the heavens that Adam's sin had closed - and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation.”

As the adoration of the magi showed the power of Jesus, the baptism in the Jordan is indicative of His vulnerability as a result of the Incarnation. Jesus Himself in no way needs the saving power of Baptism as Christians do, yet He submits Himself to it regardless. Jesus’ baptism also shows us what we must do to reach heaven at the end of our lives. As said in the Catechism, “The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father's beloved son in the Son and ‘walk in newness of life.’”

## The Wedding Feast at Cana

The wedding feast at Cana is the final event we remember as we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany. This wedding feast, at which Jesus performed the miracle of turning water into wine upon the request of His mother, proves to be much more than Jesus’ first public miracle.

According to Pope Francis in an address to an audience, what occurs at the wedding feast at Cana illuminates the person of Jesus and the reason for His coming. The wedding feast mirrors the eventual wedding feast in heaven. In the Catechism, it states: “At Cana, the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast – that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride.”

Additionally, the miracle at Cana gives us insight into the role of Mary as Mother. “It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross, that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true ‘Mother of all the living.’” The person of Mary as shown in Scripture fades into the background over time: she is present in Scripture throughout the time of the Annunciation, Nativity and in Jesus’ early life, but is rarely mentioned in Jesus’ later years. Her presence at this wedding feast evokes her humble importance as Mary, Mother of the Church: her humility is indicated in her request of a favor from her Son, and her importance is shown by Jesus’ affirmation of it.

