

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord

By: Fr. Daniel Meynen

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying <Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.>“

The many countries, the Epiphany of the Lord is celebrated on the Sunday that follows the first day of the year. This initiative thus permits believers to participate in the celebration of this feast, which would otherwise take place on a weekday, usually. It is all in all a happy initiative, since Sunday is the day of the Lord par excellence, the day which was formerly consecrated to the Sun, the star which God created to rule the day: “God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.” (Gn. 1:15)

The sun became the sign of Christ, who is Light come into this world in order to illuminate the nations: “The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.” (John 1:9) It was not the sun that guided the wise men toward Jerusalem and toward Bethlehem, because Christ had not yet been born, and so it was no suitable for him to be designated by the sun. It was in fact another star, a star similar to all those which men grouped together into constellations and which are at the origin of their astrological predictions. Thus, God wanted the star that guided the wise men to be the sign of the new times, the times of God, which are not the times which men would have predicted.

“When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, <Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.” (Micah 5:2)>“

God foresaw all things! He created the stars the stars so that, one day, one of them would guide the wise men to the place where His Son was to be born, and He also inspired the prophets to announce to everyone the birthplace of the Savior of mankind! So Micah announced that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, and according to the prophecies of Daniel, it was known that the time of the Messiah’s coming was near. But while the Holy Scriptures were addressed directly to the Jews, the star that guided the wise men was a sign for all nations! It was truly the sign of the new times, with all

the men and women of the earth now being called to belong to the people whom God has chosen! The new Israel is born!

“Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying <Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.>“

We know perfidy of Herod: he wanted to use the wise men to help him to find the child Jesus and kill him! But, though Jesus was to die one day, betrayed by his own people, his hour had not yet come: the star that guided the wise men was not yet denoting the time of the Savior’s death. This star was the ‘good star’ of Christ, the one that brought him glory and recognition from all nations. Certainly, this glory was not complete, far from it. But what was important to the Lord was the sincerity of heart which these wise men had and which they demonstrated to him through their respectful presence.

“When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.”

Everything on earth, everything in our life must lead us to worship the Lord of universe! The sun, which God gives us to illuminate and warm us, must serve us in our praise of the Lord and in our adoration of him. The star that guided the wise men also helped them to adore God: “Going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.” the sun which we see every day, and notably on Sunday, is the sign that reminds us that Christ is the Light come into this world! The star that guided the wise men proclaimed to them that the Lord was going to come into this world to illuminate it through his Word!

The sun is a reminder, the star of the wise men was a proclamation . . . It is in this spirit that we celebrate the Mass every day: it reminds us of the coming of the Lord, and it proclaims to us his return in the end times! May Mary help us to remember her Son and to await his coming deep in our heart!

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Isaiah 60:1-6 Ephesians 3:2-6 Matthew 2:1-12

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上主的榮耀普照祂的子民

摘自「荒漠燃荊」

內容：先知以上主的榮耀，普照祂的子民，上主的光榮臨於耶路撒冷比擬天主救恩的完滿(60:1-2)。因著天主的光榮和臨在，萬國萬民都奔赴「天主的王國」，來尋求天主的祝福(60：3)，並加入祂的國度來下稱揚上主的榮耀(60：5-6)。

上下文：上文是有關天主計劃親自去拯救他的子民，神聖萬軍的上主，以審判和解放去建立祂的王國，更以新的盟約，更以新的盟約、聖神、賦予歸依祂的子民和他們的後裔(59：16-21)。下文是熙雍的重建來和平與繁榮的新紀元。它將被稱為的城，「以色列聖者的熙雍」，它充滿喜悅，和平和正義！(60：7-16;參閱默21：1-5：21-27)

釋義：「耶路撒冷啊！起來炫耀吧！」(1) 耶路撒冷，希伯來文解「和平之城」。起來炫耀；在先知的神視中，已經不必像過去那樣，受戰敗的羞，以脊背作為平地，作為街道，任敵人走過(依51：23)。現在先知請她起來，因為上主的光輝已臨在她的身上。

「上主的榮耀已經照耀著你」(1)

上主的榮耀是指天主自己。流徙的時候，天主好像遠離了祂的子民，現在祂要重新降來，居住在他們中間，好像從前他們祖先在出埃及時，以火柱和雲柱帶領著他們，在他們中間保護著他們(出13：21-22)。上主的榮光使熙雍成為光明，成為萬邦在黑暗中的真光(9：1)。「榮耀」一詞，在首三節經文中，一共出現了八次，作者以重複用詞的手法，顯示上主的榮耀充滿耶路撒冷。

「你的光明.....你光輝的蒞臨」(3)

指在天主的王國中，天主的法律和教訓(2：3)，亦是天主新的啟示。

「他們都聚集來到你這裡；你的兒子要從遠方而來，你的女兒也要被抱回來」(4)

從前的外教人、異民和仇人現在都要變成耶路撒冷的子民(詠87[86])。散佈各地的以色列民也要回來。男子自己走路回來而軟弱的女子卻要被人領回來。

「喜形於色.....興奮愉快」(5) 因為熙雍已成為萬民的母親。這位看見眾多新生兒女的母親，其喜樂洋溢於表。

「黃金和乳香」(6) 是為裝飾聖殿和奉獻祭祀時的用品。

訊息：天主的美善和德能，全在這短短數節中表達了出來。我們可以看到上文的天主親自建立祂自己和平的王國，向萬民施行審判和救援。這救援不但只施予天主的選民以色列，也惠及了全人類。救恩來自熙雍和所有歸依天主的人。是天主將自己的民族更新(依59：20；詠14[13]：7)。天主的奇妙救恩更由耶穌基督的來臨而達至完滿。耶穌的被派遣，就是為建立天主的王國(參閱瑪12：28；路11：20：17：20-21)，實踐祂的許諾。