

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

The Epiphany of the Lord | For Sunday, January 3, 2021

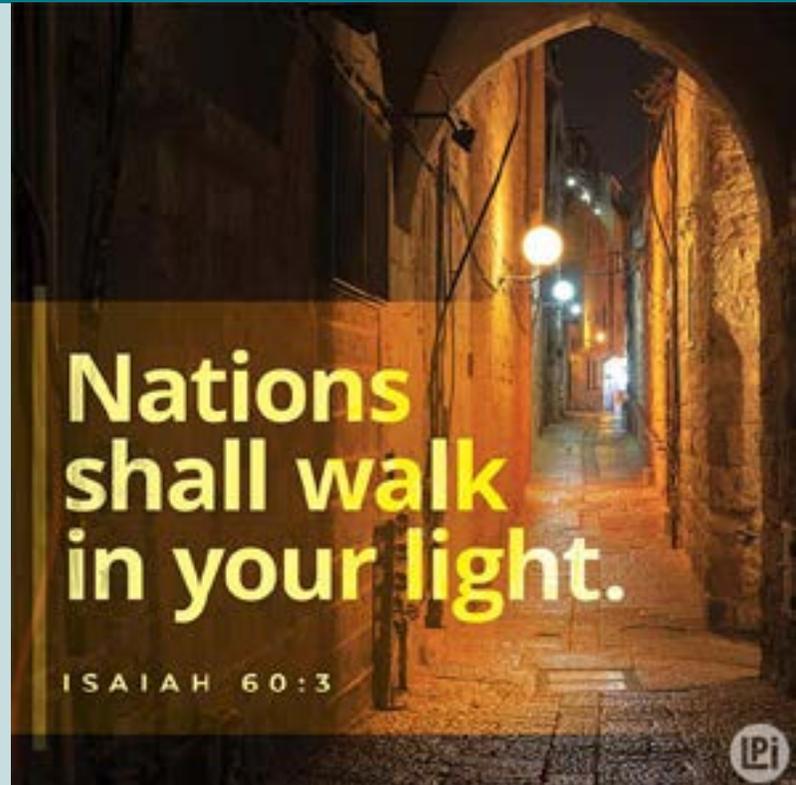
## A Journey of Faith

Written by Bro. Silas Henderson, S.D.S.

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12



When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” —Matthew 2:1-2

In his novel, [Brideshead Revisited](#), Evelyn Waugh tells the story of Charles Ryder and the Marchmain family. Near the end of the novel, Ryder has an awakening, an epiphany, as he watches the final act of faith of a man he presumed shared his ambivalence toward Catholicism. Despite himself, Ryder “felt the longing for a sign...the hand moved slowly down his breast, then to his shoulder, and Lord Marchmain made the Sign of the Cross. Then I knew the sign I had asked for was not a little thing, not a passing nod of recognition, and a phrase came back to me from my childhood of the veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom.”

In the ancient world, an *epiphaneia* was a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a secular ruler to the cities of his realm. The celebration of the Epiphany of the Lord brings together the quiet realizations of a Charles Ryder character with the grandeur of a king’s visit. In this great feast, we are not passively remembering the journey of the magi — Epiphany is a dynamic feast celebrating the redemption that has been won for us through the Incarnation of Christ.

While the visit of the magi — representing the nations of the world — is an unmistakable sign that the salvation offered by the newborn King is for all times and peoples, writers through the ages saw the magi's journey as a symbol of conversion and the journey of faith that each of us is traveling. This is why the twelfth century abbot and bishop [Saint Bruno of Segni](#) would reflect in a sermon for the Epiphany, "We offer the Lord gold when we shine in his sight with the light of heavenly wisdom. We offer him frankincense when we send up pure prayer before him, and myrrh when, mortifying our flesh with its vices and passions by self-control, we carry the cross behind Jesus."

Following the inspiration of God, we move from the darkness of doubt and sin, entering into the light and freedom of God's children. As [Pope Benedict XVI](#) remarked, "How important it is that we Christians are faithful to our vocation! Every authentic believer is always travelling his own personal itinerary of faith, and at the same time, with the little light that he carries within himself, can and must be a help to those alongside him, and even help the one for whom finding the way that leads to Christ is difficult."

The heavenly light that guided the magi still shines in the Gospel, which continues to guide us along our pilgrim way. The gift of this great Christmas feast reminds us that the Church, and every person of faith, has been entrusted with that same light and we are called to carry that light into the dark places of the world in our prayer, words, and acts of charity. "Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk in your light, and kings by your shining radiance." (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Bro. Silas Henderson, S.D.S.

## PRAYER

May the splendor of your majesty, O Lord, we pray,  
shed its light upon our hearts,  
that we may pass through the shadows of this world  
and reach the brightness of our eternal home.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

(from *The Roman Missal*: Collect for the Vigil Mass  
of the Solemnity of the Epiphany)