

Sunday Readings Reflections of 1/3/2016

Reading 1 Isaiah 60:1-6

In this first reading God's people hear words of encouragement. God is going to "shine on them" again and give them a new opportunity to keep their covenant and be faithful. If they do that, they will be filled with joy. The writer also hints of an even more joyous time when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, will come into the world and persons will come from afar "bearing gold and frankincense."

Like the Israelites, we often fail to keep our covenant with God. But God, who is always faithful, offers us another chance to fill our lives with the peace and joy of God's love.

Reading 2 Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

In the second reading the people of Ephesus are told that the Good News of Jesus is meant not just for the Jews but for all people. We are called to be "co-heirs" in the promise of Jesus Christ. That means we share in his work of salvation by caring for others, by reaching out to those in need, and by being peacemakers.

Gospel Matthew 2:1-12

The story of the astrologers, or magi, following the light of a distant star is full of surprises. The astrologers, who were Gentiles, were the first to worship Jesus as the newborn King of the Jews. They found him, not in a palace surrounded by signs of wealth and might, but as a helpless baby in the arms of Mary, his mother. Yet the astrologers believed and worshiped him, offering him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, Matthew tells us, full of joy and wonder, they returned to their distant homes.

The astrologers had the faith and wisdom to see in this baby the promised Messiah. Christ shows himself to us, too, and comes into our lives in many ways and through many people. If we are people of faith, we will find him in these little "epiphanies." We will offer him our own gifts—our prayers and worship, our loving service of others, and our constant faith, even when it might seem hard to find him.