



Sunday Readings - Epiphany

7th January 2024

FIRST READING

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

60:1-6

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come,
the glory of the Lord is rising on you,
though night still covers the earth
and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises
and above you his glory appears.
The nations come to your light
and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round:
all are assembling and coming towards you,
your sons from far away
and your daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant,
your heart throbbing and full;
since the riches of the sea will flow to you,
the wealth of the nations come to you;

camels in throngs will cover you,
and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
everyone in Sheba will come,
bringing gold and incense
and singing the praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Ps. 71:1-2,7-8,10-13. *R/. cf.v.11*

***R/. All nations shall fall prostrate before you,
O Lord.***

O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement. ***R/.***

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds. ***R/.***

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him. ***R/.***

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor. ***R/.***

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

3: 2-3, 5-6

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted
by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it
was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of
the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed
through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets
was unknown to any men in past generations; it
means that pagans now share the same inheritance,
that they are parts of the same body, and that the
same promise has been made to them, in Jesus Christ,
through the gospel.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea
during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came
to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king
of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose
and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod
heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole
of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests
and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them
where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in
Judaea,' they told him 'for this is what the prophet
wrote:

*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least
among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel.'*

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him
privately. He asked them the exact date on which the
star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem.
'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when
you have found him, let me know, so that I too may
go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the
king had to say, they set out. And there in front of
them was the star they had seen rising; it went
forward, and halted over the place where the child
was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and
going into the house they saw the child with his
mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him
homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered
him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But
they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod,
and returned to their own country by a different way.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



The Epiphany of the Lord

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

“We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.”

The Epiphany of Jesus, his revelation to the world, was accompanied by the offering of three gifts, each of which symbolized a different aspect of the saviour who is both human and divine.

Frankincense, used to make sweetly fragrant incense, is offered in worship to Jesus, the Son of God, the eternal Word of the Father who is adored with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Gold is offered to Jesus the King of the human race, the summit of creation.

Myrrh, which is used for embalming and in making incense, is offered to the Saviour of the world who suffered and died for the salvation of all.

Epiphany means ‘manifestation’. Jesus perfected revelation by manifesting himself: through his words and deeds, his signs and wonders, but especially through his death and glorious resurrection from the dead and the final sending of the Spirit of truth.

Today’s feast celebrates the whole working out of the Incarnation in subsequent history, the abiding presence of the God made man among his brothers and sisters.



**Friday 12 January 2023
St Aelred of Rievaulx**

Aelred was born in Hexham in around 1109. His family was well connected and at an early age he was sent into the service of King David of Scotland. There he rose to the position of Master of the Royal Household. In time he became attracted to the religious life, but he was also much attached to the life he lived at court and to King David himself. It took a considerable personal struggle for him at the age of 24 to give up his secular pursuits and to enter the newly founded Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx in Yorkshire in 1133. At 34 he moved from there and took charge of a new foundation in Lincolnshire. But within four years he had returned to Rievaulx as Abbot where he remained for the rest of his life. He died in 1167.

Aelred is remembered both for his energy and for his gentleness. His writings and his sermons were characterised by a deep love of the Scriptures and by a very personal love of Christ ‘as friend and Saviour’. He was sensitive and understanding in his dealings with his fellow monks and under his direction the monastery at Rievaulx grew to an extraordinary size. He did not enjoy robust health and the last ten years of his life were marked by a long and painful illness. His position as Abbot required him to travel on visitation to monasteries not only in England and Scotland but even in France, and the physical suffering and exhaustion which this incurred seems to have been considerable. A contemporary account of the last year of his life describes him as being left helpless on his bed unable to speak or move for an hour after celebrating his morning Mass.

Aelred was a singularly attractive figure, a man of great spiritual power but also of warm friendliness and humanity. He has been called the St Bernard of the North.

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer for Epiphany

O God
Who by a star
guided the wise men to the worship of your Son
we pray you to lead to yourself
the wise and great of every land
that unto you every knee may bow,
and every thought be brought into captivity
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.