

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN MOTHER

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

BISHOP OF CHARLESTON

The Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmono

ADMINISTRATOR

Rev. Daniel R. Papineau

OFFICE SCHEDULE

Monday through Friday 8:30AM – 2:00PM

ST. MARY'S SATURDAY SCHEDULE

Adoration 9:00AM - 3:00PM
Chaplet of Divine Mercy 3:00PM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 3:15PM
Tues., Wed., and Thurs. After the 6:00PM Mass

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday 5:30PM St. Mary's Church
Sunday 9:00AM St. Joseph's Church
Sunday 11:00AM St. Mary's Church

WEEKDAY MASS SCHEDULE AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Tues., Wed., Thurs. 6:00PM
Friday 12:10PM (except First Friday)
First Friday Mass 6:00PM
First Saturday 8:00AM

SAINT'S CORNER

January 4. Convert, wife, mother, widow, teacher, religious. Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton did it all. Yet, in many ways, she was an ordinary woman of her time who lived life in an extraordinary way. Mother Seton is one of the keystones of the American Catholic Church. She founded the first American religious community for women, the Sisters of Charity. She opened the first American parish school and established the first American Catholic orphanage. All this she did in the span of 46 years while raising her five children.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 3, 2021

Sunday: Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 [cf. 11]/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12
Monday: 1 Jn 3:22—4:6/Ps 2:7bc-8, 10-12a [8ab]/Mt 4:12-17, 23-25
Tuesday: 1 Jn 4:7-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8 [cf. 11]/Mk 6:34-44
Wednesday: 1 Jn 4:11-18/Ps 72:1-2, 10, 12-13 [cf. 11]/Mk 6:45-52
Thursday: 1 Jn 4:19—5:4/Ps 72:1-2, 14 and 15bc, 17 [cf. 11]/Lk 4:14-22a
Friday: 1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20 [12a]/Lk 5:12-16
Saturday: 1 Jn 5:14-21/Ps 149:1-2, 3-4, 5 and 6a and 9b [cf. 4a]/Jn 3:22-30
Next Sunday: Is 42:1-4, 6-7/Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 [11b]/Acts 10:34-38/Mk 1:7-11 or Is 55:1-11/Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 [3])/1 Jn 5:1-9/Mk 1:7-11

GIFT SHOP TRIVIA

Last week's question and answer: Who is St. John Neumann?

John Neumann was born in what is now the Czech Republic. After studying in Prague, he came to New York at 25 and was ordained a priest. He did missionary work in New York until he was 29, when he joined the Redemptorists and became its first member to profess vows in the United States. He continued missionary work in Maryland, Virginia and Ohio, where he became popular with the Germans.

At 41, as bishop of Philadelphia, he organized the parochial school system into a diocesan one, increasing the number of pupils almost twentyfold within a short time. Gifted with outstanding organizing ability, he drew into the city many teaching communities of sisters and the Christian Brothers. During his brief assignment as vice provincial for the Redemptorists, he placed them in the forefront of the parochial movement.

Well-known for his holiness and learning, spiritual writing and preaching, on October 13, 1963, John Neumann became the first American bishop to be beatified. Canonized in 1977, he is buried in St. Peter the Apostle Church in Philadelphia.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

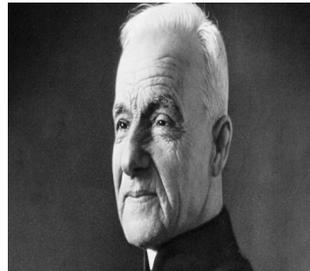
Religious Education will resume this Sunday, January 3rd at 9:15am. We are excited to welcome everyone back!



May Lord bless us all
with a happy and healthy
New Year!

ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE

A DEEP DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH



Saint André Bessette was orphaned at 12, and eventually worked in the United States during the Civil War. At 25, he became a Brother of the Holy Cross. Having a deep devotion to Saint Joseph from childhood, Saint André built the Oratory on

Mount Royal in his honor. Although sickly most of his life, Saint André lived to be 92.

He is buried at the Oratory. He was beatified in 1982 and canonized in 2010. At his canonization in October 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said that Saint Andre "lived the beatitude of the pure of heart."



A FAMILY PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

God, thank you for a new year. May everyone in our family be willing to begin anew with a clean slate. We know that you are always ready to forgive us. Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another.

As we begin a new year, remind us of our truest values and our deepest desires. Help us to live in the goodness that comes from doing what you want us to do. Help us to put aside anxiety about the future and the past, so that we might live in peace with you now, one day at a time.



9 Things You Need to Know About Epiphany

The magi followed the star and found Baby Jesus. What are we to make of this mysterious event?

On Jan. 6 (or in the United States, the first Sunday after Jan. 1) the Church celebrates the feast of “Epiphany.”

This feast commemorates the mysterious visit of the magi to the Baby Jesus.

Who were the magi? What led them to visit Jesus? And what lessons should we — and shouldn't we! — learn from this incident?

Here are nine things you should know...

1. What does the word “Epiphany” mean? “Epiphany” means “manifestation.”

It comes from Greek roots that mean “to show, to display” (*phainein*) and “on, to” (*epi-*). An epiphany is thus a time when something is shown, displayed, or manifested to an audience.

2. What is the feast of the Epiphany about?

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Saviour 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 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.

Their coming means that pagans can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Saviour of the world only by turning towards the Jews and receiving from them the messianic promise as contained in the Old Testament.

The Epiphany shows that “the full number of the nations” now takes its “place in the family of the patriarchs”, and acquires *Israelitica dignitas* (is made “worthy of the heritage of Israel!”) [CCC 528].

3. When is Epiphany celebrated?

This varies from country to country.

In some countries, Epiphany is a holy day of obligation (Canon Can. 1246 §1). Where that is the case, it is celebrated on Jan. 6. In the United States, Epiphany is not a holy day of obligation, and its celebration is transferred to the first Sunday after Jan. 1 (source).

4. Why is Epiphany connected with Jan. 6? Pope Benedict explains:

It is hard to say how far back the beginnings of the Christmas feast go. It assumed its definitive form in the third century. At about the same time the feast of the Epiphany emerged in the East on January 6 and the feast of Christmas in the West on December 25.

The two feasts had different emphases because of the different religious and cultural contexts in which they arose, but essentially their meaning was the same: the celebration of the birth of Christ as the dawning of the new light, the true sun, of history [The Spirit of the Liturgy, pp. 106-107]. Eventually, however, the emphasis on Jan. 6 shifted — particularly in the west (and in some parts of the east) — to reflect manifestations of Christ beside that which occurred at his birth (namely, those that occurred at the coming of the magi, at his baptism, and at the wedding feast of Cana).

5. Who were the Magi?

Pope Benedict explains:

In the relevant sources, the concept of Magi (*mágoi*) encompasses a wide range of meanings, from the wholly positive to the wholly negative.

To the first of the four principal meanings, Magi are understood to be members of the Persian priestly caste.

In Hellenistic culture they were regarded as “rulers of a distinctive religion,” but at the same time their religious ideas were thought to be “strongly influenced by philosophy,” so that the Greek philosophers have often been portrayed as their pupils (cf. Delling, “*mágos*,” p. 356).

No doubt this view contains some not easily definable element of truth: after all, Aristotle himself spoke of the philosophical work of the Magi (cf. *ibid.*, p. 357).

The other meanings listed by Gerhard Delling are as follows: possessors and users of supernatural knowledge and ability, magicians, and finally deceivers and seducers. . . .

For the Magi in Matthew 2, it is the first of the four meanings that applies, at least in a broad sense. Even if they were not exactly members of the Persian priesthood, they were nevertheless custodians of religious and philosophical knowledge that had developed in that area and continued to be cultivated there [Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives].

6. Why did the magi come to see Jesus?

They apparently had material of a prophetic nature (some have suggested that they got it from an eastern Jewish community, such as the one in Babylon) that allowed them to identify the birth of the new "king of the Jews" astronomically.

They may have been especially motivated to come see this king of the Jews since there was an expectation at the time that a universal ruler would shortly come from Israel. Pope Benedict explains:

We know from [the Roman historians] Tacitus and Suetonius that speculation was rife at the time that the ruler of the world would emerge from Judah — an expectation that [the Jewish historian] Flavius Josephus applied to [the Roman emperor] Vespasian, consequently finding his way into the latter's favor (cf. *De Bello Judaico* iii, 399–408) [Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives].

7. Why did they go to Herod?

Probably, because they assumed the newborn king would be a son of Herod — the current "king of the Jews." Pope Benedict comments: It is quite natural that their search for the newborn king of the Jews should take them to Israel's royal city and to the king's palace. That, surely, is where the future king must have been born [Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives]. This, of course, played into Herod's paranoia for his throne and led to the slaughter of the innocents.

8. What was the star?

It is hard to know. Some question whether the star was a natural phenomenon at all, pointing out that it seems to lead the magi to Jerusalem, disappear, and then reappear and hover over the house in Bethlehem.

But this isn't what Matthew says. He does not say that the star led them to Jerusalem. They merely report that they had seen the new king's star "in the east" (Matthew 2:2; that is, back in their homeland), which is why they came to Jerusalem.

What he does say is:

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 [Matthew 2:9].

This does not necessarily mean that the star appeared to move in the sky in a way that stars don't ordinarily.

Departing from Jerusalem at night, they may have noted on the short (6 mile) trip to Bethlehem that the star was in front of them in the sky — a coincidence arranged by divine providence. Then, when they got to the house, they noticed it was directly over the house — again, a coincidence arranged by divine providence but not necessarily an unusual motion for a star.

Thus the question of whether it could have been a natural phenomenon remains. Pope Benedict remarks:

Nevertheless, the question whether or not this was an

astronomically identifiable and classifiable celestial apparition was not going to go away.

It would be wrong to dismiss it a priori on account of the theological character of the story.

With the emergence of modern astronomy, developed by believing Christians, the question of this star has been revisited [Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives].

Various proposals have been made, including for rare astronomical phenomena like the conjunction of certain planets in certain constellations, or supernovas.

Which of these, if any, might have been the Bethlehem star depends on precisely when Jesus was born, which is too complex a discussion for this post.

9. Does this mean astrology is okay?

No. As the Catechism explains:

All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology . . . contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone [CCC 2116].

God may have arranged for certain signs to attend the birth of his Son, but this is the opposite of what astrology involves. Pope Benedict explains:

The Fathers have emphasized a further aspect. Gregory Nazianzen says that at the very moment when the Magi adored Jesus, astrology came to an end, as the stars from then on traced the orbit determined by Christ (cf. *Poem. Dogm. V* 55–64: PG 37, 428–429).

In the ancient world, the heavenly bodies were regarded as divine powers, determining men's fate. The planets bear the names of deities. According to the concept prevailing at the time, they somehow ruled over the world, and man had to try to appease these powers.

Biblical monotheism soon brought about a clear demythologization: with marvelous sobriety, the creation account describes the sun and the moon—the great divinities of the pagan world—as lights that God placed in the sky alongside the entire firmament of stars (cf. Gen 1:16f.).

On entering the Gentile world, the Christian faith had to grapple once again with the question of the astral divinities. Hence in the letters he wrote from prison to the Ephesians and the Colossians, Paul emphasizes that the risen Christ has conquered all the powers and forces in the heavens, and that he reigns over the entire universe.

The story of the wise men's star makes a similar point: it is not the star that determines the child's destiny, it is the child that directs the star [Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives].