

## ***Year B – Epiphany of the Lord – January 7, 2024***

*“Your light has come”*

*Three readings*

### **OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 72)**

Leader: The Lord delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.

**All: God has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the oppressed.**

Leader: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

**All: Blessed be God’s glorious name forever;  
may God’s glory fill the whole earth**

### **Gospel -- Matthew 2:1-12**

This well-known passage from Matthew’s infancy narrative compares and contrasts the openness of the wise men, the “outsiders,” with the power-hungry and suspicious King Herod, a Jewish leader, and therefore, an “insider.” The powers of light and of darkness, the energy for good found in dreams and the brute power of oppression and force, an open universal perspective and a closed defensive and self-serving isolation -- all these are clearly contrasted here.

1. What, in the wise men's experience, communicated there was something special about this birth?
2. How did God's revelation to the wise men challenge the assumptions of Jewish beliefs?
3. In your experience, how do “insiders” (i.e. those inside the church) display Herod-like characteristics and how do “outsiders” display openness and faith in God?

### **LIVING THE WORD**

Which part of God’s Word today challenges me/us this coming week?

### **PRAYING THE WORD**

**Intercession: That we may have a new heart and an open spirit as we reflect on and evaluate the life of our parish community we pray to the Lord.**

*Intercessions concluded with the Our Father*

### **Closing Prayer:**

Leader O God, comforter of refugees and outsiders  
Help us to welcome you in the stranger,

**All: To embrace you in the weak and vulnerable,  
And to serve you in all the children around us.**

Leader: Be patient with us, Lord, as you grow and expand  
Our hearts, our visions, our spirits.

**All: We make this prayer in the name of the One  
Who came to us as a baby, a refugee, an outcast,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.*