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Father, You revealed Your Son to the nations by the guidance of a star.

Lead us to Your Glory in Heaven by the Light of Faith.

THE MYSTERIES OF JESUS' INFANCY

Jesus' *circumcision*, on the eighth day after His birth, is the sign of His incorporation into Abraham's descendants, into the people of the covenant. It is the sign of His submission to the Law and His deputation to Israel's worship, in which He will participate throughout His life. This sign prefigures that "circumcision of Christ" which is Baptism.

The **Epiphany** is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior 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 Savior 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").

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #527-528. OFFER OUR GIFTS TO THE DIVINE CHILD WITH THE MAGI (Pope John Paul II)

I want to draw your attention briefly to the attitude of the Magi. When, through the guidance given by the mysterious star, they found Mary with the Child Jesus, "they prostrated themselves and did Him homage. Then they... presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

Modern man, too... meets with God when he opens up to Him with the interior gift of his human "ego," to accept and exchange the immense gifts which He presented to him first: the gift of existence, the gift of the Redemption, the gift of faith. And that Child, who accepted the gift of the Wise Men, is still always He before whom people and entire peoples "open their coffers," that is, their treasures.

The gifts of the human spirit take on a particular value in the act of this opening to the incarnate God; they become the treasures of the various cultures, the spiritual wealth of the peoples, and of the nations, the common patrimony of all mankind. The centre of this exchange is Christ: the same who accepted the gifts of the Magi.

He Himself, the same who is the invisible and incarnate Gift, causes opening up of souls to that exchange of gifts. Not only individuals live by them, but peoples, nations, the whole of mankind.

THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF MARY

Most Protestants claim that Mary bore children other than Jesus. To support their claim, these Protestants refer to the biblical passages which mention the "brethren of the Lord." As explained in the Catholic Answers tract <u>Brethren of the Lord</u>, neither the Gospel accounts nor the early Christians attest to the notion that Mary bore other children besides Jesus. The faithful knew, through the witness of Scripture and Tradition, that Jesus was Mary's only child and that she remained a lifelong virgin.

An important historical document which supports the teaching of Mary's perpetual virginity is the *Protoevangelium of James*, which was written probably less than sixty years after the conclusion of Mary's earthly life (around A.D. 120), when memories of her life were still vivid in the minds of many. According to the world-renowned patristics scholar, Johannes Quasten: "The principal aim of the whole writing [*Protoevangelium of James*] is to prove the perpetual and inviolate virginity of Mary before, in, and after the birth of Christ" (*Patrology*, 1:120–1).

To begin with, the *Protoevangelium* records that when Mary's birth was prophesied, her mother, St. Anne, vowed that she would devote the child to the service of the Lord, as Samuel had been by his mother (1 Sam. 1:11). Mary would thus serve the Lord at the Temple, as women had for centuries (1 Sam. 2:22), and as Anna the prophetess did at the time of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:36–37). A life of continual, devoted service to the Lord at the Temple meant that Mary would not be able to live the ordinary life of a child-rearing mother. Rather, she was vowed to a life of perpetual virginity.

However, due to considerations of ceremonial cleanliness, it was eventually necessary for Mary, a consecrated "virgin of the Lord," to have a guardian or protector who would respect her vow of virginity. Thus, according to the *Protoevangelium*, Joseph, an elderly widower who already had children, was chosen to be her spouse. (This would also explain why Joseph was apparently dead by the time of Jesus' adult ministry, since he does not appear during it in the gospels, and since Mary is entrusted to John, rather than to her husband Joseph, at the crucifixion).

According to the *Protoevangelium*, Joseph was required to regard Mary's vow of virginity with the utmost respect. The gravity of his responsibility as the guardian of a virgin was indicated by the fact that, when she was discovered to be with child, he had to answer to the Temple authorities, who thought him guilty of defiling a virgin of the Lord. Mary was also accused of having forsaken the Lord by breaking her vow. Keeping this in mind, it is an incredible insult to the Blessed Virgin to say

that she broke her vow by bearing children other than her Lord and God, who was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The perpetual virginity of Mary has always been reconciled with the biblical references to Christ's brethren through a proper understanding of the meaning of the term "brethren." The understanding that the brethren of the Lord were Jesus' stepbrothers (children of Joseph) rather than half-brothers (children of Mary) was the most common one until the time of Jerome (fourth century). It was Jerome who introduced the possibility that Christ's brethren were actually his cousins, since in Jewish idiom cousins were also referred to as "brethren." The Catholic Church allows the faithful to hold either view, since both are compatible with the reality of Mary's perpetual virginity.

Today most Protestants are unaware of these early beliefs regarding Mary's virginity and the proper interpretation of "the brethren of the Lord." And yet, the Protestant Reformers themselves—Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli—honored the perpetual virginity of Mary and recognized it as the teaching of the Bible, as have other, more modern Protestants.

Taken from Mary, Ever Virgin, Catholic Answers

<u>'VOCATION SEEDS'</u> By Baptism we are God's holy family. Pray today for the grace to live faithfully your vocation as a single, married, ordained or consecrated person. If you feel God is calling you to a Church vocation, please email Fr. Hansoo at vocations@vocations.ca or call 416-968-0997.

2010 CHURCH SUPPORT ENVELOPES As announced last week, envelopes are ready to be picked up in the Church hall. Envelopes are organized alphabetically. For the parishioners who put their donations in previous year's envelopes, plain envelope and/or use loose cheques week after week, please help us record your donation in our accounting system by getting a box of envelopes which will be your envelope number to use. If your box is not there, or if you are new to the parish and wish to use envelopes, please sign the sheet located near the envelopes and a box will be prepared for you the following week. Church support is a precept of the Church undertaken with gratitude to God for His countless blessings.

If anyone desires illumination to know God's will as well as strength to do it, let him come to Mass daily, if he possibly can. At least let him present himself daily before the Blessed Sacrament, and, as it were, offer his heart to His Incarnate Saviour, presenting it as a reasonable offering to be influenced, changed and sanctified under the eye and by the grace of the Eternal Son.

-John Henry Cardinal Newman

3 gennaio 2010 - Epifania del Signore

"La Provvidenza misericordiosa, avendo deciso di soccorrere negli ultimi tempi il mondo che andava in rovina, stabilì che la salvezza di tutti i popoli si compisse nel Cristo. ... Tutti i popoli, rappresentati dai tre magi, adorino il Creatore dell'universo, e Dio sia conosciuto non nella Giudea soltanto, ma in tutta la terra, perché ovunque «in Israele sia grande il suo nome» (cfr. Sal 75, 2). Figli carissimi, ammaestrati da questi misteri della grazia divina, celebriamo nella gioia dello spirito il giorno della nostra nascita e l'inizio della chiamata alla fede di tutte le genti. Ringraziamo Dio misericordioso che, come afferma l'Apostolo, «ci ha messo in grado di partecipare alla sorte dei santi nella luce. E' lui che ci ha liberati dal potere delle tenebre e ci ha trasferiti nel regno del suo Figlio diletto» (Col 1, 12-13). ... Tutto questo, lo sappiamo, si è realizzato quando i tre magi, chiamati dai loro lontani paesi, furono condotti da una stella a conoscere e adorare il Re del cielo e della terra. Questa stella ci esorta particolarmente a imitare il servizio che essa prestò, nel senso che dobbiamo seguire, con tutte le nostre forze, la grazia che invita tutti al Cristo. In questo impegno, miei cari, dovete tutti aiutarvi l'un l'altro. Risplendete così come figli della luce nel regno di Dio, dove conducono la retta fede e le buone opere. Per il nostro Signore Gesù Cristo che con Dio Padre e con lo Spirito Santo vive e regna per tutti i secoli dei secoli. Amen. (S. Leone Magno)."

Prostràti i santi Magi adorano il Bambino, offron doni d'Oriente: oro, incenso e mirra.

O simboli profetici di segreta grandezza, che svelano alle genti una triplice gloria!

Oro e incenso proclamano il Re e Dio immortale; la mirra annunzia l'Uomo deposto dalla croce.

Betlemme, tu sei grande fra le città di Giuda: in te è apparso al mondo il Cristo Salvatore.

Nelle sue mani il Padre pose il giudizio e il regno: lo attestano concordi le voci dei profeti.

Non conosce confini nello spazio e nel tempo il suo regno d'amore, di giustizia e di pace.

A te sia lode, o Cristo, nato da Maria Vergine, al Padre e allo Spirito nei secoli dei secoli. Amen.

AVVISI

- 1. La tradizionale festa della famiglia si terrà il 9 gennaio; per ulteriori informazioni, telefonate ad Antonietta (905-737-3210) o Rosa (905-731-9175).
- 2. Vi si prega di prelevare le buste per le offerte per il nuovo anno.
- 3. A tutti, auguri di un felice anno nuovo.

	TENTIONS	Jan. 3 - 9
SUN.	9:30 a.m.	+Orazioa & Antonio Pacitto
		+Angelo & Maddalena Pacitto
		+Giovanna Risi
		+Giuseppe Giancola & Family
		+Antonio Visconti
		+Gennaro & Rosa Minchella
		+Tony Minchella
		Holy Souls in Purgatory
		Spec. Int. of Augusta Gnocato
MON.	9:00 a.m.	+John Quinn
TUE.	9:00 a.m.	+Milan Grm
WED.	9:00 a.m.	+Michaelangelo Montano
	7:00 p.m.	+Enza Paolinelli-Gironda
	-	Spec. Int. of the Mazzobelo
		Family
THURS.	8:00 a.m.	+Lucy D'Souza
FRI.	8:00 a.m.	
	7:00 p.m.	In Honour of the Sacred Heart
	,	of Jesus
SAT.	9:00 a.m.	In Honour of the Immaculate
_		Heart of Marv
		+Stefan Balazic
		+Special Int. Pacienca Inting &
		,
		Sullivan
FRI.	8:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Spec. Int. of the Mazzobelo Family +Lucy D'Souza Holy Souls in Purgatory In Honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus In Honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary +Stefan Balazic +Special Int. Pacienca Inting & Family +Lina Perugino Spec. Int. of Jack & Monica

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KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION begins on Jan. 18 in our Catholic Schools or at the Catholic Education Centre. We look forward to welcoming your child into our schools where we emphasize academic success and spiritual growth. Please check the parish bulletin or the Board website at www.ycdsb.ca

Ted Zygmunt.

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST IMPELS US" (2 Cor. 5:14) Jesus is inviting you to spend time with Him so that you may discover whether He is calling you to the priesthood. At St. Augustine's Seminary on Feb 5-7, there will be an opportunity for young men of 18 years or older to spend a weekend for time of prayer, reflection and information on the process of becoming Christ's disciple through the priesthood.

COME CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF THE PRIEST at St. Brigid's Parish, Toronto on Jan 9th at 2 – 4:30 p.m. Fr. McErlean O.S.A. will speak on "The Importance of the Mass in our Lives". For more information check www.kolbeapostolate.com.

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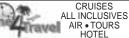
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