

Keysis Outline

1/3/07

The Christmas Season and the Epiphany

The Christmas Season

- The Christmas seasons begins on the Eve of Christmas
- It ends on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
- The Epiphany falls on the Sunday 2 weeks after Christmas—Jan. 7th this year
- The Baptism of the Lord falls on the Monday after Epiphany Sunday
- In older days when people lived the liturgy, trees were not decorated until Christmas Eve, because that is when Christmas officially begins. Also, they were not taken down until the Feast of the Baptism.

The Epiphany

- Read Is 60:1-6 and Mt. 2:1-12
- In Greek, the word Epiphany means “the appearance; miraculous phenomenon”.
- It is a feast intended to celebrate the ‘shining forth’ or revelation of God to mankind in human form, the person of Jesus
- It consists of three significant events in the life of Jesus which reveal Him as the Messiah: The visit of the Magi or three Wise Men, the Baptism of the Lord, and the Wedding at Cana.

The visit of the Magi (Mt. 2:1-12)

- The three kings come from the East, are wealthy and wise, and are not believers in the one, true God
- Directed by a star, they arrive to the humble surroundings of a smelly, dirty stable to find the prophesied King.
- Their names are Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar
- They come bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh
 - Gold—for the King of Kings
 - Frankincense—for the Priest of Priests
 - Myrrh—for the Sacrifice to come (used to anoint bodies after death)
- In some traditions, gold, frankincense, and chalk are offered during the Epiphany liturgy. The priest would then go from house to house marking each doorway with the letters CMB for the initials of the

- wise men. The letters also stand for the phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which translates “may Christ bless this house/mansion”.
- The visit of the wise men is the first revelation to the world that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah

The Baptism of the Lord and the miracle at Cana

- Both of these events reveal Jesus as Messiah
- In his baptism, the dove flies down to hover over Jesus and a voice from heaven proclaims, “this is my Son, in whom I’m well pleased.” (MT 3:16-17)
- At the wedding feast, the Lord performs his first miracle, showing his power as the Son of God