



"We saw his star at its rising and
have come to do him homage." MATTHEW 2:2

**THIS
WEEKEND**
Reverse Advent
Calendar Food
Drive

Following Jesus Without a Star to Guide Us

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

"We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage" (Matthew 2:2) describes the spark that sent the Magi on their journey. Something unusual in the sky, interpreted as a sign of something wonderful—in response, they changed direction in their lives and devoted themselves to a completely different path. As wonderful as it might well be, a special star in the heavens is not the ordinary experience of how we learn to follow the Lord or discern his will. If only there could be a sign in God's universe for each of us, beckoning us forward, clarifying what we need to do, setting down the path that needs to be followed. Perhaps life would be much simpler. Or perhaps not?

Would it truly be less complicated if everything were made clear and certain? Is the manifestation of God's grace and blessings confined to the straight and narrow, or can we also experience God in the chaos—"in the weeds," so to speak. Human experience seems to suggest that life is more "gray" than "black and white." There is real grace in the journey, in making mistakes, even in choosing something that is incomplete. Thankfully, God's grace does not need perfection to be powerful. We can know and follow God's will for us in the ordinary moments of day-to-day living. We do not need the extraordinary or the dramatic. ●



LEARN ABOUT
THE AUTHORS
OF OUR PARISH
COMMUNITY

Reflect

How can I resolve to look for God in the unplanned, the unexpected, the interruptions?



ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

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Pastor: Reverend Joseph F. H. Morley, Vicar General • Cell: 705 0236

Email: stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com

Weekend Masses: Vigil: 5:00pm, Sunday: 10:15am
Saturday 8:00pm (Neo-Catechumenal Mass).

Baptisms: by appointment 3 weeks in advance

Weddings: by appointment 6 months in advance

www.facebook.com/stmichaelpaget & "LIKE" us | Diocesan Webpage: www.romancatholicbermuda.bm

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Mass Schedule & Intentions

*We welcome our parishioners and visitors who have come to St. Michael's to worship this weekend.
May you be blessed by your presence here today.*

MINISTRIES ...

JANUARY 3/4th - THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

5:00PM Lector: Joshua Blee EM: Karen Marsh
10:15AM Lector: Willie Forbes EM: Joyce Lee
 Collection: Carlos DeFrias

JANUARY 10/11th - THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

5:00PM Lector: Kathy Anderson EM: Fred Anderson
10:15AM Lector: Pat Robinson EM: Christine DaCosta
 Collection: Pat Robinson

MASS INTENTIONS ...

JANUARY 3/4th - THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

5:00PM For the Victims & Families of the Bondi Beach Attack, AUS.
10:15AM For World Peace

JANUARY 10/11th - THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

5:00PM For St. Michael's Parishioners
10:15AM For A Healthy, Faithfilled and Peaceful 2026 for all

Thank you for your generosity.



Stewardship

sharing the gifts we have been given

DECEMBER 27/28th COLLECTION: \$465.00

Donation to Maintenance Fund: \$180.00

Christmas Flower & Music Liturgy: \$959.00

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE
 to St. Michael's Church's: BNTB Account # 2000 6060 081824 100.

WHEN MAKING YOUR ONLINE TRANSACTION, BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND "COLLECTION" AS YOUR MEMO ON YOUR BANKING TRANSACTION.

Pastor's Point ...

Dear Parishioners,

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. "The Lord and ruler is coming; kingship is his, and government and power." With these words the Church proclaims that today's feast brings to a perfect fulfillment all the purposes of Advent. Epiphany, therefore, marks the liturgical zenith of the Advent-Christmas season.

The Solemnity of the Epiphany is celebrated either on January 6 or, according to the decision of the episcopal conference, on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. The young Messiah is revealed as the light of the nations. Yet, as the antiphon for the Magnificat at Second Vespers (Evening Prayer) reminds us, three mysteries are encompassed in this solemnity: the adoration of the Christ Child by the Magi, the Baptism of Christ and the wedding feast at Cana. Extra candles and/or lamps may be placed around the sanctuary and in other parts of the church to honor Christ revealed as the Light of the Gentiles (Ceremonial of Bishops). It is customary to replace the images of the shepherds at the crib with the three Magi and their gifts.

—Ceremonies of the Liturgical Year, Msgr. Peter J. Elliott, Ignatius Press

The feast of the Epiphany, which was kept in the East and in certain Western Churches before being observed in Rome, seems to have been originally a feast of the nativity; January 6, for those churches where it was kept, was the equivalent of Christmas (December 25) in the Roman Church. The feast was introduced at Rome in the second half of the sixth century and became the complement and, so to say, the crown of the Christmas festival.

Epiphany means manifestation. What the Church celebrates today is the manifestation of our Lord to the whole world; after being made known to the shepherds of Bethlehem He is revealed to the Magi who have come from the East to adore Him. Christian tradition has ever seen in the Magi the first fruits of the Gentiles; they leave in their wake all the peoples of the earth, and thus the Epiphany is an affirmation of universal salvation. St. Leo brings out this point admirably in a sermon, read at Matins, (Morning Prayer) in which he shows in the adoration of the Magi the beginnings of Christian faith, the time when the great mass of the heathen sets off to follow the star which summons it to seek its Saviour.

That is the meaning, too, of the wonderful prophecy from Isaiah which the liturgy appoints to be read in the first nocturn at Matins and at the Epistle of the Mass. This same thought of universal redemption the Church returns to as she sings, in the antiphon to the Magnificat at 2nd Vespers, applying the words to herself, of the union with Christ typified by the wedding feast at Cana, by the baptism of her children foreshadowed by that of Christ in the waters of the Jordan. Formerly the Epiphany was an additional day for solemn baptisms.

DID YOU KNOW? - that Epiphany is a large celebration, especially in Spanish speaking countries. Things look different around the household: the infant Jesus in the manger now has a small gold crown and is wearing regal robes. The figures of the wise men have reached Bethlehem, completing the nativity scene.

The Church extends itself on Epiphany to the homes of the faithful. The custom of blessing the home on this day probably originated from these words in the Gospel, "And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother, and falling down they adored Him." The priest blesses the house if he can be present, but if not, the father of the family may do so.

As we start a new year, let us commit ourselves throughout 2026 and beyond to courageously manifest our Lord in our daily life, to practice our faith with intent, to be a light in the country of Bermuda that seems to be embracing non-Christian and Catholic values. Maybe, to increase my knowledge of my Catholic faith by daily attending to my spiritual self with the material I encourage you to read and use, plus try to attend sessions that I offer. If there are any suggestions or ideas please do not hesitate to talk to me.

My prayer for you this year of our Lord, 2026 and beyond, is to be filled with health, abundance of blessings, happiness, increased faith, practicing hope, applying love, God bless,

Fr. Joe

Fr. Joe, Pastor and Vicar General

Source: Catholic Culture - The Liturgical Year "The Epiphany of the Lord" (Dec. 30, 2025, online version)



Bishops Corner . . .

Dear Fellow-Catholics,

As we began a new calendar year, on 1 January we celebrated the 59th World Day of Peace. For his first message on this occasion, Pope Leo chose the theme: "Peace be with you all: towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace." The Pontiff reflected especially on the fear, growing military spending, and threat of war in our world, inviting all people to embrace an authentic peace rooted in love and justice.

Reflecting on the peace that the risen Christ shared with his disciples, the Holy Father wrote: *"Let us open ourselves to peace! Let us welcome it and recognise it, rather than believing it to be impossible and beyond our reach. Peace is more than just a goal; it is a presence and a journey."* He highlighted that the path of the Gospel is one of nonviolence and recalled the challenge this posed to Jesus' disciples, who were commanded by the Lord to *"put your sword back into its sheath."*

Reflecting further on the life of Christ, the Pope noted: *"His was an unarmed struggle in the midst of concrete historical, political, and social circumstances."* Consequently, he emphasised that Christians today must recognise past complicity in violence and commit themselves to prophetic witness. *"May this be one of the fruits of the Jubilee of Hope, which has moved millions of people to rediscover themselves as pilgrims and to begin within themselves that disarmament of heart, mind, and life,"* concluded the Holy Father.

For official text of the message, see: <https://tinyurl.com/ctd8f9b8>

Have a peaceful weekend and a serene and blessed new year!

+ Wes Jurek

Bishop Wes



Dear Padre,

I recently lost my husband of sixty years. I prayed for him through his four-year illness. Since he has died, I cannot pray. Any advice for me?

My heartfelt condolences on your profound loss. When someone we love dies, a part of us dies too. Sometimes, the trauma is so severe that it can even affect our relationship with God. Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identified five stages of grief. In the denial stage, some people can't accept the reality of the death. It becomes too much to handle. In the anger stage, some may question their belief in God—especially if their prayer requests (such as, "Please God, if you heal my loved one, I will...") weren't successful in the bargaining stage. People in the depression stage feel overwhelmed by the reality of the loss and may not always feel like connecting with others—even with God in prayer. However, in the acceptance stage, emotions stabilize, and a person comes to terms with their new reality. Nothing makes up for the absence of a loved one, but people manage to cope and live on.

It's because you loved so deeply that the loss feels so deep. God accepts you completely; God understands how you feel. He wants you to be at peace and live life fully. Our compassionate God yearns to help console you and offer assistance in your healing process until you can embrace him again in prayer. ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org



YANDRY FERNÁNDEZ PERDOMO / CATHOPIC



YANDRY FERNÁNDEZ PERDOMO / CATHOPIC

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

Let us resolve to bring [God's] love everywhere, never forgetting that each of our sisters and brothers is a dwelling place of God and that his presence is manifested above all in the little ones, in the poor and the suffering, who ask us to be thoughtful and compassionate Christians.

REGINA CAELI, ROME, MAY 25, 2025

What is Happening in Our Diocese?

St. MICHAEL'S

- **SYNODAL BIBLE STUDY** - is inspired by the method of SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION used during the Synod on Synodality. It is leading a small group using the texts from the Sacred Scriptures in a structured format emphasising: listening, discernment, and community, fostering a deeper connection with scripture and with each other. This NEW BIBLE STUDY will be on Thursdays starting on January 15th at 3:00pm in the Pastor's Office at St. Michael's Church. Just park behind the Church and make sure to bring your CATHOLIC BIBLE. This is FREE and is open for anyone in the diocese interested with everything else provided. Any questions please contact Fr. Joe at 705-0236.
- **EMMAUS Bible Study:** The Bible Study resumes on January 13th 2026.
- **NEOCATECHUMENAL WAY** - "The Word" is on Wednesdays at 7:00pm Neocatechumenal Way Eucharist celebration - each Saturday at 7:00

St. THERESA'S

- During the winter season St. Theresa's Cathedral will be locked at 4:00pm from Monday to Friday.
- Daily Mass is celebrated at 7:30am.
- Noon Day Mass in St. Theresa's Cathedral: The 12:10pm Mass is celebrated each Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

St. ANTHONY'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated Tuesday - Friday at 8:30am

St. PATRICK'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated at 8:00am
- The Rosary is recited every, WEDNESDAY at 10:00am
- No Adoration on Thursday December 25th
- A mass in Tagalog takes place on, THE SECOND FRIDAY of the month at 7:00pm.

St. JOSEPH'S

- A Filipino mass is celebrated every, THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH at 11:00am

STELLA MARIS

- A Filipino mass is celebrated on the LAST Wednesday OF THE MONTH at 7:00pm

ST. THERESA'S GIFT SHOP *Opening hours - 10:00am-2:00pm.*
Tuesdays and Saturdays. Come and see what we have.

Reverse Advent Calendar Food Drive

"It is better to give than to receive" Acts 20:35

Completed boxes should be delivered to your church hall **THIS weekend of January 3/4th**. Alternatively, you can deliver your box to St. Patrick's Church Hall on Saturday, January 3, from 10:00am to 11:00am. Arrangements will be made for the boxes to be collected from the church halls for distribution. All food collected will be donated to The Eliza Dolittle Society food bank. Collection at each parish will be coordinated by each parish's St. Vincent de Paul representative. All questions can be directed to Elaine Kelly at 236-4613 or ekelly@ibl.bm.

Deliver your boxes to church hall during the weekend of January 3/4, 2026 when attending mass. Alternatively, you can deliver your box to St. Patrick's Church Hall on Saturday, January 3, 2026

WORDS OF LIFE:

"Through the Incarnation and birth of Christ, God reveals to us the dignity of all human life. Human life, as a gift of God, is sacred and inviolable. The Son of God has united himself with every human being and desires for us to share eternal life with him... Each of us is made in the image and likeness of God, and we reflect his glory in the world."

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities "The Gospel of Life: A Brief Summary"



Prayer for the Closing of the Jubilee Year

Father in heaven,

as we come to the close of this Jubilee Year, we thank you for the faith you have renewed in us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and for the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

May the hope awakened during this sacred time remain alive within us, strengthening our trust in the coming of your Kingdom.

May the grace we have received bear lasting fruit, transforming us into faithful witnesses and tireless cultivators of the Gospel.

May the seeds sown during this Jubilee continue to grow within humanity and all creation, as we await, in hope, the new heaven and the new earth, where your glory will shine forever and all evil will be overcome.

As we conclude this Jubilee, send us forth as Pilgrims of Hope, carrying a deeper longing for the treasures of heaven and a renewed commitment to spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the world.

To you, our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever and ever.

Amen.

CELEBRATING THE Epiphany

The Epiphany is a special day that celebrates the coming of the Magi. Families are invited to bring their children to come and meet the Magi. Parents are encouraged to help their children write a letter asking Jesus for special gifts.

Date: January 9, 2026
Where: St. Michael's Church
Time: 7:00 PM

*Kindly complete the sign-up sheet

*A fellowship gathering will take place in the hall. Food and beverages are welcome.

For more information contact
Maura Almeida 704-2255/ almeidam84@gmail.com

Our Sunday Readings

ISAIAH 60:1-6
PSALM 72:1-2,7-8,10-13
EPHESIANS 3:2-3a,5-6
MATTHEW 2:1-12

A Light to the Gentiles

ISAIAH 60:1-6

Reading closely

1. How is the situation in Jerusalem different from everywhere else?
2. Who all is coming to Jerusalem?
3. What draws people to the sacred city?
4. What are people bringing to Jerusalem?
5. How do you think Jews reacted to this prophecy?
6. How might non-Jews have reacted to this prophecy?
7. What part of this passage most captures your imagination?

Living the word

8. What all does *the light* mean to you?
9. How are you drawn to the light?
10. What are you bringing with you as you move toward the light?

THE FIRST READING

The dark past

The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem by 585 BC and decimated the population. The Persians came to power about fifty years later. They permitted the Jews to rebuild their lives in

Jerusalem, but few Jews had returned by the time this prophecy was spoken.

The glorious future

In this passage the prophet personifies Jerusalem. He tells the city to *rise up* from the ashes of devastation (v.1). God's glory descends upon her alone (v.2). Her children, the descendants of Jews displaced by the Babylonians, are coming home (v.4).

Gentiles, who haven't known the ways of the LORD (v.2a), are now drawn to Jerusalem by God's light. They bring wealth with which they will rebuild the city and temple (vv.5b-6, also 10f). The frankincense is for use in the temple, which indicates that everyone who once worshiped other gods will worship the LORD alone.

Everyone everywhere

In the larger passage from which this reading was chosen, we hear of people coming to Jerusalem from every direction. They even cross the sea. Gentiles from all over the world will worship the LORD and honor his chosen people.

MATTHEW 2:1-12

Imagine that you're one of the magi.

1. Why did you decide to follow the star?
2. How long have you been traveling?
3. Describe your journey.
4. Describe your traveling companions.
5. What do you talk about on your journey?
6. Have you ever been to Jerusalem?
7. What do you expect to find in Judea?
8. How do you expect the leaders in Jerusalem to act?
9. When you reach Jerusalem and meet King Herod, how do you interpret the prophecy the scribes recite?
10. How do you feel when Herod summons you secretly?
11. How does Herod seem to you?
12. What do you and the other magi talk about when you leave Herod?
13. How do the child's parents react to your arrival?
14. What do you say and do?
15. What gift did you bring and why?
16. Why don't you go back to Herod?
17. How does this experience change you?

Living the word

18. What does this story teach you about God?
19. What does the story teach you about human beings?
20. What else does your time of reflection leave you thinking about?

comet, or a planet was a sign. In this case, the star signified that a future king had been born.

Some biblical scholars also see a connection to the pagan prophet Balaam. He prophesied that the one who would defeat the enemies of Israel would be like a star advancing from Jacob (Numbers 24:17).

Kings

As current king of the Jews, Herod is shaken by the news that a potential usurper has been born. The negative reaction of *all Jerusalem* (v.3) points ahead to the ultimate rejection of Jesus, as does Herod's attempt to kill the child (v.16f).

The magi, meanwhile, offer gifts to the child as was customary when visiting a monarch. These gifts recall the prophecy from the first reading. Because Matthew lists three specific gifts, Christians later assumed that there were three magi.

Homage

When entering the presence of a ruler, it was customary to *prostrate* oneself or bow down (v.11). The magi's obeisance foreshadows the worship of Jesus as Son of God (14:33, 28:17).

The magi's homage also points ahead to Jesus' command to his followers to *make disciples of all nations* (28:19). The magi represent the Gentiles who will be receptive to the story of Jesus.

THE GOSPEL READING

The magi

In the fifth century BC the Greek historian Herodotus wrote that the *magi*, originally from Medes, exercised a priestly role. They also prophesied and interpreted dreams. In truth, we don't know for sure who they were. Our uncertainty about the identity of the magi enhances the wonder and drama of their visit.

The star

Matthew presents the magi as being able to interpret celestial events. At the time of Jesus, many people believed that the appearance of a star, a

PRAYER

Opening Prayer for the Epiphany of the Lord

O God,
who on this day
revealed your only begotten Son to the nations
by the guidance of a star,
grant in your mercy that we,
who know you already by faith,
may be brought to behold the beauty of your
sublime glory.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and
ever. Amen.