

In Celebration of Epiphany - The Lord makes known His Salvation throughout the entire Earth



The Adoration of the Magi, tapestry, wool and silk on cotton warp; designed by Edward Burne Jones with details by William Morris and John Henry Dearle; 1894; Manchester Metropolitan University; United Kingdom.

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*From the sermon by Saint Leo the Great, pope
(Sermo 3 in Epiphania Domini, 1-3. 5: PL 54, 240-244)*

The merciful providence of God, when He disposed to succour the world that was perishing in the plenitude of time, determined to save all mankind, in Christ.

This mankind forms the countless descendants promised to Abraham in an earlier time: a progeny that would be conceived not according to the flesh but rather, by the fecundity of his faith. For this reason this progeny was compared to the multitude of the stars, so that the hope of the father of all nations would focus on a lineage from Heaven, rather than from the earth.

Enter! Enter, all gentiles, into the family of the patriarchs. Receive the children of the promise, the blessing of the progeny of Abraham, to which the children have renounced according to the flesh. In the persons of the three Magi may all the nations adore the Author of the Universe; and may God be known not only in Judea, but throughout the entire earth, with the goal that in all places His Name may be great, as well as in all of Israel.

Learned in the true doctrine, my most beloved brothers and sisters, let us celebrate these mysteries of the Divine Grace, filled with spiritual bliss; on this, the day of our first beginnings, and the beginning of the vocation of the gentiles, giving thanks to God most merciful who, as the Apostle says, has made us capable of sharing the inheritance of the holy nation, in the Light. He has removed us from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us to the Kingdom of His Beloved Son. This is as Isaiah has prophesied: *the nation of the Gentiles, which walked in darkness, has seen a great light; over those who inhabited a land of shadows, has shined an intense, resplendent light*. Of these peoples, the same prophet, addressing God, declared: *You will call an unknown people; a people that did not know You will run towards You*.

This is the day that Abraham contemplated and leapt with joy, upon recognizing the children of his faith that would be blessed in their progeny, which is Christ; and, by contemplating beforehand that this would be meant to be, by his fatherly faith, for all the nations, he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God, who had promised it, also had the power to make it so.

This is the day the psalmist sang about, when he stated: *All the nations will come to prostrate themselves before Your presence, Lord. They will bless Your name*. And also, when he sang: *The Lord makes His salvation known; He reveals His justice to all the nations*.

We know that these predictions began to be fulfilled from when that star made the three Magi leave their country, so that they would know and adore the King of Heaven and earth. His docileness is for us an example which exhorts us all to follow, according to our abilities, the invitations of grace, which take us to Christ.

All of you, my most beloved brothers and sisters, must emulate this Divine Grace in this pursuit, with the end that you shine like sons of the Light in the Kingdom of God, to which we arrive by the integrity of our faith and by good works. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, who is God, for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER

Lord, You who manifested Your Son in this day to all the nations through the means of a star, grant us, who already know You through our faith, to come to contemplate, face to face, the infinite beauty of Your glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, who is God, for ever and ever. Amen.



The Star of Bethlehem by Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898); 1890; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham England.

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