

# *The Feast of Epiphany*

*Fessahaye Mebrahtu 01-02-2021*

“Epiphany is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12)” (Oxford Languages). Therefore, Epiphany which means divine or super-natural revelation. The birth of Christ, the divine revelation to humanity. For centuries the Latin Church celebrated the Epiphany of the Lord January 6, which is either Christmas day or Christmas eve in most Eastern Rite Christians. For example, Armenians and Syro-Malankara celebrate Christmas January 6 and Alexandrian and most Byzantine Rites celebrate January 7. In any case, none of the Christian traditions have an accurate date, month or year when Jesus was born. The practice of celebrating the birth of Jesus started at around 3<sup>rd</sup> century and started evolving and guessing when Jesus was born. However, the central point is not which Christian tradition have the right or closer date rather it is celebrating God among us, revealing himself in his only Son.

The celebration of Epiphany was moved to the Sunday or two after Christmas as the church has no longer the luxury of celebrating many feasts on weekdays. These year Epiphany falls on Sunday, January 2. First reading states, “Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you.” The readings signify that the presence of the Lord among us a cause for joy and celebration. The divine light shining on us makes us transparent and lucid for others to see and walk by the light shone in us and reflected from us to the people covered in darkness and thick clouds.

The three-wisemen or Magi, who were gentiles could see and read the signs of the time and seek God’s gift to humanity and recognize it as a shining star. Their openness to such divine light also opened their hearts to be generous and prepare gifts worthy of God and royalty. Upon encountering “the child and Mary, his mother; they prostrated themselves and did him homage.” On the other hand, the good news for the Magi was bad news to King Herod, who was the child of promise. The Gospel readings states, “When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” King Herod was afraid this newborn king was going to take away his power while the “chief priests and scribes” were troubled because God was acting outside of their control. They assumed that they were the gateways and gatekeepers of God’s plan of salvation. Therefore, they expected to find out about this newborn king before the gentiles. In both instances we notice misplaced jealousy by King Herod, the chief priests, and scribes. A sense of entitlement could be an impediment for us to recognizing the presence of the Lord in ordinary.

Epiphany helps us to discern the presence of the Lord and his promise in the ordinary. Theophany is also synonymous word; however, the later tends to point to the extraordinary awesome manifestations of God, compelling us to believe and act. Christianity started as underdog religious movement because Christ was humble servant, who wanted his followers to do like what he did as ordinary of washing the feet of his disciples. Jesus constant phrase has been “You do likewise.” Once we discover God’s presence in the ordinary is it a cause for joy or a source of trouble. Let us enter our inner sanctuary and sort out our gifts, whether they worthy of God to offer.