

The Epiphany of the Lord



God, the Creator of Life, must be sought with a humble willingness if we are to have a chance recovering from the bondage of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments. At a certain point, we must admit that we are powerless over substances or behaviors and that we can only be saved by the hand of God. By blending recovery with our Catholic faith, we come to know Jesus as more than just some abstract figure.

As we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord this Sunday, we are reminded of the spiritual quest that we have been sent upon. Having been familiar with Jewish scripture at the time of Christ's birth—particularly the writing of Isaiah—magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem asking about the revelation of the Lord.

Knowing there was more to this spiritual experience, the magi sought further direction on where to go and where the Messiah was to be born. While their own calculations and intuitions got them to Jerusalem, experts in revelation and religion gave more specific detail on where to find the savior.

From Matthew's Gospel, we hear the remainder of this story:

*Then Herod called the magi secretly
and ascertained from them the time of the star's
appearance.
He sent them to Bethlehem and said,
"Go and search diligently for the child.
When you have found him, bring me word,
that I too may go and do him homage."
After their audience with the king they set out.
And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising
preceded them,
until it came and stopped over the place where the
child was.
They were overjoyed at seeing the star,
and on entering the house
they saw the child with Mary his mother.
They prostrated themselves and did him homage.
Then they opened their treasures
and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and
myrrh.
And having been warned in a dream not to return to
Herod,
they departed for their country by another way.*

Our own recovery, in some order, takes similar shape. Having spent time navigating the waters of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments with our own compass, we are given opportunities to follow the Light that guides us. We don't always know why or how, but some set of circumstances and inspiration moves us in the direction of God.

We are not alone. Our own resources can only get us so far, but others along the path will provide more detailed instructions once we start moving. Mentors and sponsors from our recovery fellowships play a vital role in sharing experience, strength, and hope while guiding us through the Twelve Steps. Therapists, psychiatrists, and spiritual directors can be valuable resources as we dig deeper into emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Friendships centered around Christ and recovery add an abundance of joy and keep us in the middle of the herd.

God, who is active in our lives, will provide further direction as we begin or deepen our journey toward freedom. We must remain consistent and patient in our prayer lives and take real action to learn from the experience of others. Like the magi, the course of our lives will change upon coming to know Jesus Christ.

Reflection Questions

- What support do you find from the Church and your local community related to addiction recovery?
- How have friends, mentors, sponsors, spiritual directors, confessors and/or therapists impacted your life in recovery and directed you toward Jesus?
- How is God calling you to take new action or explore new opportunities in this new year?

Living the Steps Begins January 30

*Join the Catholic in Recovery community
as we journey together through the Twelve Steps*

- Gatherings will take place via Zoom Thursdays at 8:00p ET/5:00p PT for 22 weeks (ending July 3)
- Work through the Twelve Steps of recovery integrating Catholic faith using *The Catholic in Recovery Workbook*
- Small group breakouts based on addiction type and gender
- Visit catholicinrecovery.com/livingthesteps to learn more and register

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12