

Do You See What I See?

Today's Gospel answers this question quite definitively: No! Not everyone saw the guiding star in the sky. Not even those who, presumably, knew the prophecy found in the reading from Isaiah. That ancient prophet announced to the people of Jerusalem: "Your light has come" (Isaiah 60:1). In fact, he promised them they would be so embraced by that light, they themselves would shine brightly with its radiance. But when the time came, not everyone saw it. Or, having seen it, they did not recognize it.

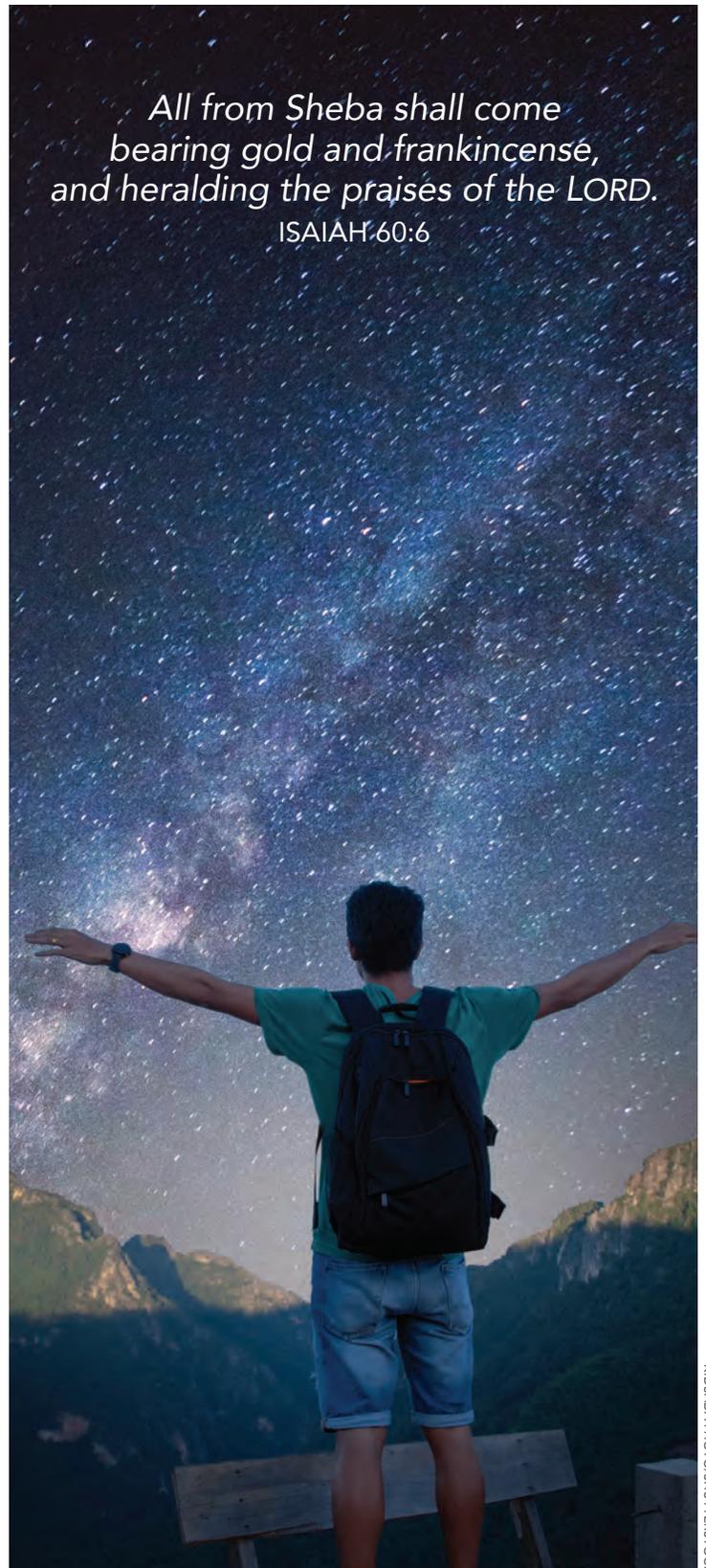
The people of Jesus' time were not ignorant of these prophecies. They knew what they meant and to whom they referred. Consequently, when the stargazers who saw the light inquired about it, those to whom they inquired knew where to send them. So what was the problem? Why were those men in Jerusalem not excited about the star? Very simply, a new king meant a rival king, and those who had power weren't eager to relinquish it.

We know that not everyone in Israel rejected Jesus. Shepherds had already thrilled at this birth. Someone in Bethlehem had opened his home to this child and his parents. Now we add to them the stargazers from another country. It seems the invitation to come to him is extended to all: political and religious leaders, the unsophisticated and marginalized, the established homeowner, the foreigners in their midst. They are all asked: "Did you see what I saw? What do you think of him?"

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ✦ *How open are you to new thinking?*
- ✦ *God's invitation is offered to all. Is there any group of people you might have marginalized?*



*All from Sheba shall come
bearing gold and frankincense,
and heralding the praises of the LORD.
ISAIAH 60:6*

Dear Padre,

A friend who is a fundamentalist insists Epiphany happened exactly as it says in the Bible. I say there's no way it could have. Who is right?

Catholics believe each book of the Bible needs to be appreciated according to the principles of its own literary genre. We don't look to the Gospels for modern critical history or unbiased biographical/reportorial fact-telling.

The four Gospels were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Each Gospel writer uses human skill to craft a true story, presenting the saving mystery of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection so that readers may come to know Christ, share his life, and be saved.

Every story in the Gospels is shaped to communicate saving truth, but not every story is told as a direct "just the facts, ma'am" report of sequential events. So there is a saving sense in which, yes, the Epiphany happened exactly as it says in Matthew 2:1–12. And there is a more literal sense in which, no, the Epiphany probably did not happen exactly as it's recounted.

What is most certain is the Gospel's saving message of the birth of our true king, the light to all nations, before whom we offer homage and who, when we encounter him, will change our lives and send us home in a new path.

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ADORATION OF THE MAGI BY BARTOLOMÉ ESTEBAN MURILLO/WIKIPEDIA

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

As we begin the New Year, may we discover anew that faith demands worship....For worship involves making an exodus from the greatest form of bondage: slavery to oneself. Worship means putting the Lord at the center, not ourselves.

EPIPHANY HOMILY, JANUARY 6, 2020



Calendar

Monday

JANUARY 4

*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
Religious*

1 Jn 3:22—4:6

Mt 4:12–17, 23–25

Tuesday

JANUARY 5

*St. John Neumann,
Bishop*

1 Jn 4:7–10

Mk 6:34–44

Wednesday

JANUARY 6

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 4:11–18

Mk 6:45–52

Thursday

JANUARY 7

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 4:19—5:4

Lk 4:14–22a

Friday

JANUARY 8

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 5:5–13

Lk 5:12–16

Saturday

JANUARY 9

Christmas Weekday

1 Jn 5:14–21

Jn 3:22–30

Sunday

JANUARY 10

Baptism of the Lord

Is 55:1–11

1 Jn 5:1–9

Mk 1:7–11