

Dear Friends

The 6th of January started the Epiphany celebration and ushers in a season of great importance.

Epiphany invites us to delve deeper into the mystery of Jesus, and to see how God's glory was made known through him. The focus of Epiphany (the word means a sudden insight or revelation) is on the visit of the magi to the little boy Jesus.

Matthew's Gospel (2:1-12) tells this story to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah who not only rescues God's people, but who draws all people to God.

The foreign sorcerers (magi), who are among the first to recognise and worship Jesus, would not have been permitted into the Temple, but they were welcomed into the house where Jesus lived, and they willingly gave their gifts and their worship to this new king. This is such a beautiful image of God's welcome for all people, irrespective of nationality or ethnicity.

In Isaiah 60: 1-6, the prophet speaks to the newly returned exiles of Israel. Although their world had been devastated, and the work of rebuilding was overwhelming, the prophet reminds them that God's glory is with them, and that they are still called to be a light to the nations. During these times of uncertainty, God's promise of being present with us, is a great comfort. God is with us! Will you hold on to that promise?

God promises that the people will return home and know God's presence, but also that people from around the world will come to trade and to bring gifts to God's people because of God's glory revealed in them.

The mention of frankincense and gold resonates with the gifts of the magi, but the focus is on the peace and celebration that would result from the people's awareness of God's glory, not on the material wealth they would receive.

In the same way, we are called to rejoice at God's presence and glory with us and within us.

When we keep our hearts and minds connected with God, we discover peace and joy even when we are engaged in the tough work of healing and rebuilding, and others are drawn to the presence of God that they experience through us. What is the state of your heart? Is it home to peace? Or does it breed bitterness and discontent? How are you helping to spread peace and reconciliation during these challenging times?

How can you experience and reflect God's glory today? When our lives are filled with praise, we automatically experience more of God's presence. This is because we constantly remind ourselves to see where God's glory is being manifest in our world. Then, as we notice God's light shining around and within us, we automatically help others to see it too. Can you stop for a moment and notice the beauty around you and then begin to praise God for that?

This month fill every moment with God's praises.

My prayer for this month: I praise you, O God, and I celebrate your glory that shines in and through me. Amen.

Peace and Grace

Romeo.