Mary Mother of Jesus is an Inclusive Catholic Community.

Today we celebrate The Epiphany.

The Light We See

The Gifts We Bring

Co-Presiders: Dotty Shugrue ARCWP, Co-Presider Joan Pesce

Prayer Leaders/Readers: Jeanne Schmidt, Suzanne Bires

Internet Technician: Michael Rigdon

Joan: **All are welcome to our weekly liturgy celebrated by the community of Mary Mother of Jesus, our church without walls.**

WHOEVER YOU ARE,

WHEREVER YOU ARE,

ALL OF YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR TABLE.

Opening Prayer:

Joan P. **O Christ-Light from the beginning of time, you have graced the universe with your brilliance and your love. As we gather to celebrate travelers who followed a star to discover the birth of a child, and the Divine light within him and within them, may we remember our own birth into the light and love of Holy Mystery. May we, in this time of giving, reach out, now and throughout the year, to those in need of your loving touch and healing graces. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.**

Opening Song: Light a Light. By Bridget Ball and Chris Shaw
https://youtu.be/CTrY3g0vl88

Joan: **Transformation Rite**

Let us recall times we did recognize the simple gifts other were offering to us and in return shared the Christ Presence of pure love with them.

Pause for several moments of silent reflection as you place your hand over your heart.

ALL: I am sorry, please forgive me, I thank you, I love you.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reader: **Jeanne**

Our First Reading is from the prophet Isaiah Ch 60, 1 – 6 (adapted from "A Multi-Gospel Single-Year Lectionary" by Wilda C. Gafney)

Arise daughter; shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Holy One has risen upon you. For watch now, daughter! Darkness shall cover all people and all on the earth, the Holy One will arise, and over you, daughter, God's glory will appear. Nations shall come

to your light, and monarchs to the brightness of your dawn. Lift your eyes round about, and see all of them gather, they come to you, daughter; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' hips. Then, you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall tremble and swell, because the abundance of the sea shall turn toward you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, O daughter. Young camels of Midian and Ephah—all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praises of the Holy One. Your gates shall always be open, daughter, being led by their monarchs.

These are the inspired words of Wilda C. Gafney, based on the Book of Isaiah the prophet. And our community affirms them by saying

All: Amen.

Reader: Suzanne

Our Second Reading is from "We Make the Road by Walking" by Brian McLaren pp.82-83.

They were called Magi…we know them as wise men. They were astrologers, holy men of a foreign religion. They had observed a strange celestial phenomenon, which they interpreted to mean that a new king had been born in Judea. According to Matthew's gospel, they traveled to honor him, bringing valuable treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh---precious gifts indeed.

In their giving of gifts, they were wiser than they realized. Gift-giving turns out, was at the heart of all Jesus would say and do. God is like a parent, Jesus would teach, who loves and shower sons and daughters with good gifts. The kingdom or commonwealth of God that Jesus constantly proclaimed was characterized by an abundant, gracious, extravagant economy of grace, of generosity, of gift-giving. "It is better to give than to receive," Jesus taught, and his followers came to understand Jesus himself as a gift expressing God's love to the whole world.

So, in memory of the wise men's gift-giving to Jesus, in honor of Jesus' teaching and example of giving, and as an echo of God's self-giving in Jesus, we joyfully give one another gifts when we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Not everyone felt generosity in response to this new baby.

King Herod was furious about anyone who might unsettle the status quo. When he deployed troops to the Bethlehem region with orders to kill all infant boys, Joseph was warned in a dream to escape. So, the family fled south to Egypt where Jesus spent part of his childhood as a refugee.

These are the inspired words of Brian McLaren and our community affirms them by saying: ALL: LET IT BE SO

Celtic Alleluia

tps://youtu.be/o1rc7ojQtJU

Joan P: Gospel

A reading from the Gospel attributed to the Apostle Matthew chapter 2: 1 - 12

After Jesus' birth—which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod—astrologers from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage." At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In Bethlehem of Judea," they informed him. "Here is what the prophet has written:
'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
since from you will come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people, Israel.'
Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the
star's appearance. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, "Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me—so that I may go and offer homage, too."

After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed
at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where
the child lay. They were overjoyed at seeing the star and, upon

**entering the house, found the Dchild with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves
and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts
of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

**They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own
country by another route.**

These are the inspired words from Gospel writer known as Matthew and the community affirms them by saying, Amen.

Dotty: **Homily Starter**
Community shares their inspirations.

Jeanne: **Statement of Faith**

**We believe in the Holy One, a divine mystery
beyond all definition and rational understanding,
the heart of all that has ever existed,
that exists now, or that ever will exist.**

**We believe in Jesus, messenger of the Divine Word,
bringer of healing, heart of Divine compassion,
bright star in the firmament of the Holy One's
prophets, mystics, and saints.**

**We believe that We are called to follow Jesus
as a vehicle of divine love,
a source of wisdom and truth,
and an instrument of peace in the world.**

**We believe in the Spirit of the Holy One,
the life that is our innermost life,
the breath moving in our being,
the depth living in each of us.**

**We believe that the Divine kin-dom is here and now,
stretched out all around us for those
with eyes to see it, hearts to receive it,
and hands to make it happen.**

Prayers of the Community

Suzanne: As we prepare for this sacred meal, we are aware of our call to serve, and to give freely of our gifts, and we willingly and humbly accept the abundance of gifts given as we journey, sharing and accepting the pure and everlasting love of the Holy.

We bring to this table our gifts shared and the gifts received during this past year, as well as the gifts we send to those who are hurting in so many countries, that they may receive the Energy of The Giver of Love, as Love is all there is in the Divine Energy of Life. It heals, it gives strength, it comforts through you and me.

We bring to the table….
(Unmute and share what you hold in your heart so that we may join you in prayer

We bring these and all our cares, and concerns to the table of friendship and peace.

God is the Divine Presence within us.
And in all people everywhere.

We Affirm the gifts that are born of our faith. We are committed to consciously share them with all whom we meet on our journey of Life.
And we accept and affirm the gifts others offer us out of their love and caring.

Here in this Place – Holy Holy Holy by Christopher Grundy
https://youtu.be/cVWY9ourooIWITH

Jeanne: With open hands and hearts, let us pray together our Eucharistic prayer:

Divine Presence, you brought forth all creation from your Life-Giving Womb. O Giver of all Gifts, you came as Love Poured Out to dwell among us. You revealed yourself to travelers who followed a star to the home were Jesus and Mary and Joseph lived so that they could share the gifts with this family in need and see the child who they believed to be a future King who would change the world.

Today, we see the gifts of the Christ Presence shining forth as our Light as we remind ourselves and one another we too hold the gifts to be shared and the Light to share. We give thanks to you, Giver of Abundant Light, continue to gift us with wisdom to know who needs us to reach out in love. We commit ourselves as gifts of your goodness and generosity as we serve the needs of the least and the last in our world.

Dotty: As your people, we gather in the power of your Spirit. As followers of Jesus, we seek to live as wise and holy Spirit-filled people: courageous, prophetic, ever hopeful, and hope-filled as we answer your call to serve one another.

We choose to live justly,
love tenderly,
and walk with integrity

[Please extend your hands over your bread and wine]

We invoke Your Spirit upon these gifts of this Eucharistic table, bread of the grain and wine of the grape, that they may become gifts of wisdom, light and truth which remind us of our call to be the body of Christ to the world.

On the night before he faced his own death, Jesus sat at supper with his companions and friends. He reminded them of all that he taught them, and to fix that memory clearly, he bent down and washed their feet.

[lifting bread]
When he returned to his place, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and offered it to them saying: Take and eat; this is my very self.

[lifting cup]

Jesus then raised a cup of blessing, spoke the grace, and offered the wine saying: *Take and drink of the covenant made new again through my life in you. Whenever you remember me like this, I am among you*.

This is the bread of life and cup of blessing. May our eating and drinking strengthen our hope!

Joan: **What we have heard with our ears, we will live with our lives; as we share communion, we will become communion, both Love's nourishment and Love's challenge.**

Receive the bread and cup now saying to one another "You are gift to me, Thank you "

Pause for reflection

What Shall I Give to You by Sara Thomsen

https://youtu.be/UUTs9qa5h3

Joan P. **We remember The Travelers from the East who followed a star that shined more brightly than any other. We rejoice that the Sacred Spirit remains always and ever present within and around us. We remember all those who have transitioned from life on earth to complete union with Divine Presence: We remember the prophet and saints in every age, who, lighted candles in the night, and illuminated the darkness of doubt with faith, courage, and wisdom.**

(Pause to remember names)

Suzanne: **Let us pray the way Jesus taught us to pray:**

O Holy One, who is within, around and among us,
We celebrate your many names.
Your Wisdom come.
Your will be done, unfolding from the depths within us,
Each day you give us all we need.
You remind us of our limits, and we let go.
You support us in our power, and we act with courage.
For you are the dwelling place within us,
the empowerment around us,
and the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen
(Miriam Therese Winter)

Dotty: **Introductions Gratitude Announcements**

BLESSING

Dotty: **Let us pray together our blessing for one another:**

Let us go out into the world to share our gifts generously and to love deeply and inclusively. In so doing, we shine the light and gift of God's love for all to see and receive. Amen.

Closing Song: If We Hold On Together - song by Diana Ros
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHML4e4LlSY

Addendum

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, the evening the three Kings from the far away East arrived in Bethlehem with very special gifts of great value-- gold, frankincense and myrrh to honor the child Jesus.

Children of Spanish descent have never lost their enthusiasm in celebrating the stories about the Three Kings. Before going to bed, the children place their old shoes with a wish list on top for the Three Kings. In the morning, the shoes are filled with toys and gifts from the Three Kings. It is a day of great excitement, joy and thanksgiving. These traditions continue today; however, they never caught on in America. The Celebration of the Three Kings was one of those left behind when "Santa Claus" came to town. Yet the tradition of celebration with gift giving, sharing special foods, and just having a great time as they honor the true gift, the Child who was protected by these special visitors.

Too many of our children today live in situations where they fear for their lives. They are not being protected in their own countries. They are living in fear. All those in these countries are not celebrating the joys of this time of year; their mothers and fathers, their extended families will not be able to be together during this Feast Day. Like the three kings they are on a long journey. They see

the bright star in the heavens as they seek safety. They long for the gifts that freedom will be a hope realized. I invite you to put a single candle, shining in your window as a reminder to pray daily for the freedom of our Spanish people, pray that all Americans will support them giving them an easy way to bring them safely to us so that their dreams can come to be. Let our thoughtfulness keep us strong in doing anything we can to support them in their Journey.

Please send requests for intentions to Joan Meehan. Jmeehan515@aol.com
They will be added in our Community Prayer Book
Please send donations to:

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community
5342 Clark Road #3079Sarasota, Florida 34233