



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Monday, 6 January 2020*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning!

We celebrate the [Solemnity of Epiphany](#) in memory of the Magi who went to Bethlehem from the Orient, following the star, in order to visit the newborn Messiah. At the end of the Gospel story, it says that the Magi, “being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, ... departed to their own country by another way” (Mt 2:12). By another way.

After traveling a long time, these wise men from distant lands find the one they wished to meet, after seeking him for so long, undoubtedly through exertion and danger. And when they finally reach their destination, they prostrate before the Child, they praise him and offer him their precious gifts. After that, they resume their journey without delay to return to their lands. But that encounter with the Child has changed them.

The encounter with Jesus does not hold back the Magi. Indeed it instills in them a renewed thrust to return to their countries to recount what they had seen and the joy they had felt. There is a demonstration of God’s style in this, of his way of manifesting himself in history. The experience of God does not block us, but frees us. It does not imprison us, but rather puts us back on a journey and delivers us to the familiar places of our lives. The places are and will continue to be the same. However, after the encounter with Jesus, we are *no longer the ones we were*. The encounter with Jesus changes us, transforms us. The Evangelist Matthew highlights that the Magi returned “by

another way” (v. 12). They were led to change their path after the angel’s warning, so as not to run into Herod and his network of power.

Each experience of encounter with Jesus leads us to take a different road because from him comes a good power that heals the heart and separates us from evil.

There is a wise dynamic between continuity and newness: the Magi return “to their own country” but “by another way”. This indicates that *we are the ones who have to change*, to transform our way of living albeit in our everyday environment, to modify our criteria of judgment over the reality that surrounds us. Here lies the difference between the true God and treacherous idols such as money, power, success ... between God and those who promise to give you these idols such as clairvoyants, fortune-tellers, sorcerers. The difference is that idols tie us to them, they make us idol-dependent and we take possession of them.

The true God does not hold us back, nor does he allow himself to be held back by us. He opens paths of newness and freedom because he is the Father who is always with us so that we can grow. If you encounter Jesus, if you have a spiritual encounter with Jesus, remember you must always return to the same places but *by another way*, with another style. It is so. It is the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives us that changes our hearts. Let us ask the Blessed Virgin that we may become witnesses of Christ wherever we are, with a new life transformed by his love.

After the Angelus the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I offer a special thought to our brothers and sisters from the Catholic and Orthodox Oriental Churches, many of whom will celebrate the Lord’s Christmas tomorrow. Let us wish them and their communities the light and peace of Christ the Saviour. A round of applause to our Orthodox and Catholic brothers and sisters from the Oriental Churches.

On the day of Epiphany we also celebrate Missionary Childhood Day. It is the feast of missionary children and young people who live the universal call to holiness by helping their needier peers through prayer and gestures of sharing. Let us pray for them.

I offer my cordial greeting to you all, people of Rome and pilgrims. Among you I offer a special greeting to those who have come from South Korea and to the students from the Franciscan Institute “Siena College” of New York, as well as the missionary group from Biassono and the faithful from Ferrara.

I offer a special greeting to those who brought to life the historical folk procession inspired by the tradition of Epiphany and dedicated this year to the territories of Allumiere and Valle del Mignone. And I also extend it to the parade of Magi in many cities and villages of Poland. I would like to

salute the many popular expressions linked to today's feast — I think of Spain, Latin America, Germany — traditions that should be kept in their genuine Christian meaning.

I wish everyone a happy Feast day. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!