



THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY IS LINKED TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The feast was called among the Syrians *denho* (up-going), a name to be connected with the notion of rising light expressed in Luke. I, 78. The name *Epiphania* survives in Befana, the great fair held at that season in Rome; it is difficult to say how closely the practice then observed of buying all sorts of earthenware images, combined with whistles, and representing some type of Roman life, is to be connected with the rather similar custom in vogue during the December feast of the Saturnalia.

As its name suggests, the Epiphany had its origin in the Eastern Church.

There exists indeed a homily of Hippolytus to which (in one manuscript only) is affixed the lemma *ieis ta hagia theophaneia*: it is throughout addressed to one about to be baptised, and deals only with the Sacrament of Baptism.

The first reference about which we can feel certain is in Clement who writes: "There are those, too, who over-curiously assign to the Birth of Our Saviour not only its year but its day, which they say to be on 25 Pachon (20 May) in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus. But the followers of Basilides celebrate the day of His Baptism too, spending the previous night in readings. And they say that it was the 15th of the month Tybi of the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. And some say that it was observed the 11th of the same month." Now, 11 and 15 Tybi are 6 and 10 January, respectively. The question at once arises; did these Basilidians celebrate Christ's Nativity and also His Baptism on 6 and 10 January, or did they merely keep His Baptism on these days, as

well as His Nativity on another date? The evidence, if not Clement's actual words, suggests the former. It is certain that the Epiphany festival in the East very early admitted a more or less marked commemoration of the Nativity. Still less can we think that 6 January was then observed by the Church as holy. Moreover, Origen, in his list of festivals makes no mention of it.

Owing no doubt to the vagueness of the name *Epiphany*, very different manifestations of Christ's glory and Divinity were celebrated in this feast quite early in its history, especially the Baptism, the miracle at Cana, the Nativity, and the visit of the Magi. But we cannot for a moment suppose that in the first instance a festival of manifestations in general was established, into which popular local devotion read specified meaning as circumstances dictated.

It seems fairly clear that the Baptism was the event predominantly commemorated.

At Jerusalem the feast had a special reference to the Nativity owing to the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. On the vigil of the feast (5 Jan.) a procession left Jerusalem for Bethlehem and returned the following morning. At the second hour the services were held in the splendidly decorated Golgotha church, after which that of the Anastasis was visited. On the second and third days this ceremony was repeated; on the fourth the service was offered on Mount Olivet; on the fifth at the grave of Lazarus at Bethany; on the sixth on Sion; on the seventh in the church of



the Anastasia, on the eighth in that of the Holy Cross. The procession to Bethlehem was nightly repeated. It will be seen, accordingly, that this Epiphany octave had throughout so strong a Nativity colouring as to lead to the exclusion of the commemoration of the Baptism in the year 385 at any rate. It is, however, by way of actual baptism on this day that the West seems to enter into connection with the East.

St. Chrysostom tells us how the Antiochians used to take home baptismal water consecrated on the night of the festival, and that it remained for a year without corruption. To this day, the blessing of the waters by the dipping into river, sea, or lake of a crucifix, and by other complicated ritual, is a most popular ceremony.

The people consider that all ailments, spiritual and physical, can be cured by the application of the blessed water. The custom would seem, however, to be originally connected rather with the miracle of Cana than with the Baptism. That baptism on this day was quite usual in the West is proved, however, by the complaint of Bishop Himerius of Tarragona to Pope Damasus (d. 384), that baptisms were being celebrated on the feast of the Epiphany. Pope Siricius, who answered him identifies the feasts of *the Birth of Christ* and of his *Appearance*, and is very indignant at the extension of the period for baptisms beyond that of Easter and that of Pentecost. Pope Leo I denounces the practice.

That the Epiphany was of a later introduction in the West than the Christmas festival of 25 December, has been made clear.

St. Augustine clearly observes Oriental associations in the Epiphany feasts: "Rightly", says he, "have refused to celebrate this day with us; for neither do they love unity, nor are they in communion with the Eastern Church, where at last the star appeared." St Philastrius adds that certain heretics refuse to celebrate the Epiphany, regarding it, apparently, as a needless duplication of the Nativity feast, though, adds the saint, it was only after twelve days that Christ "appeared to the Magi in the Temple".

Finally, an unknown Syrian annotator of Barsalibi (Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, II, 163) boldly writes: "The Lord was born in the month of January on the same day on which we celebrate the Epiphany; for of old the feasts of the Nativity and Epiphany were kept on one and the same day, because on the same day He was born and baptised. The reason why our fathers changed the solemnity celebrated on 6 January, and transferred it to 25 December follows: it was the custom of the heathens to celebrate the birthday

of the sun on this very day, 25 December, and on it they lit lights on account of the feast. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians too participated. When, therefore, the teachers observed that the Christians were inclined to this festival, they took counsel and decided that the true birth-feast be kept on this day, and on 6 Jan., the feast of the Epiphanies. Simultaneously, therefore, with this appointment the custom prevailed of burning lights until the sixth day."

It is simpler to say that, about the time of the diffusion of the December celebration in the East, the West took up the Oriental January feast, retaining all its chief characteristics, though attaching overwhelming importance, as time went on, to the apparition of the Magi.

The reason for the fixing of this date is impossible to discover. The only tolerable solution is that of Mgr. Duchesne who explains simultaneously the celebration of 6 January and of 25 December by a backward reckoning from 6 April and 25 March respectively.

Taken from the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*

Today's Readings



First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6. Jerusalem shines out because the glory of the Lord appears above her.

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6. The pagans now share through the Gospel in the inheritance brought by Christ Jesus, and are parts of the same body.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12. The wise men come to do homage to the infant king of the Jews and offer their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Next week: Baptism of the Lord Year C

Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7; Acts 10:34-38; Luke 3:515-16,21-22

HOLY HOUR every Thursday from 8.00 to 9.00pm including Rosary, prayers, hymns & scripture reading. All welcome!

LITURGY CORNER

The feast of the Epiphany came to be celebrated about the fourth century and has always been a very important feast, especially in the Eastern Rites. For the early Church, one of the biggest problems they faced was the realisation that even those who were not Jewish were invited to faith in Jesus as Lord. Even though his roots were in Judaism, Jesus was of significance to all who seek the truth. The word 'epiphany' comes from a Greek word meaning manifestation or revelation. In Matthew's gospel the coming of the Magi is the first public manifestation of Jesus. *Today you revealed in Christ your eternal plan of salvation. Now that His glory has shone among us you have renewed humanity in His immortal image* (Preface of Epiphany).
The Summit, adapted



A GIFT BEYOND CHRISTMAS Thank you to all who have returned donations for Loyola Senior High, Mt Druitt which will be used to help disadvantaged and single mother/mature age students complete the HSC. A total of \$13075.00 has been generously donated so far. Envelopes are still available on the Christmas Tree at the front of the Church and can be placed in the box under the Tree or put in the letterbox at the front door of the Parish Office.

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED The Parish Office will be closed from Christmas Day, Friday 25th December and will reopen on Monday 4th January.

DINNER WITH GERALDINE DOOGUE: You are invited to join in a two course dinner and an evening of thoughtful conversation with ABC TV/radio presenter, Geraldine Doogue speaking on 'Spirituality: Making Connections in our World' on Friday 12 February 2010 at 7.30pm in St Bernadette's Parish Hall. The cost is \$45.00 pp. Details: www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au.

A BIG THANK YOU to all parishioners who participated in the Cooking for the Needy Program in 2009.

Sandra Chaney

REPARATION PRAYER GROUP resumes on Wednesday 20 January at 8.00pm in the Basement of the Parish Office.

2010 PLANNER CALENDAR AVAILABLE NOW Please take home a copy. We especially thank our advertisers and sponsors and ask that you give them your support.

STATUE OF OUR LADY WITH ST BERNADETTE The Parish owns a beautiful statue of Our Lady with St Bernadette. Parishioners can borrow the statue for a week in 2010 by placing your names on the roster in the foyer. Book it for a special occasion: anniversary, birthday etc, or simply to encourage prayer in your home. Enquiries: Janina Mousley 9899 6060 or Alfred Jacobs 9894 8123.

DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY NO SERVICES WILL BE HELD IN THE RETIREMENT VILLAGES.

FERTILITY EDUCATORS NEEDED: Natural Fertility Services is looking for suitable applicants in the Parramatta and greater Sydney area to train as Fertility Educators. Some prior experience of Natural Family Planning is desirable but not essential as training is provided. Sessional work available to those who complete the training and become accredited Educators. Details: Manager, NFS (02) 9390 5156.



Youth & Young Adults Ministry



SUMMER CAMP 2010: QUICK! SPACES ARE FILLING FAST: Are you up to the excitement? Join us on January 18 - 21 for this fantastic annual event. Four fun-filled days of beach, crazy activities, friends and faith and a great way to start the new year! For anyone in **Years 6-12**. Registration forms in the foyer following mass this weekend. Keep a keen eye online at www.lifeteenaustralia.com and make sure you don't miss out on your spot!

Leaders Training - Sundays 3 & 10 January (ages 16+) If you are interested in being a leader for youth activities in 2010 then keep these days free. Training is from **1pm till 4pm** in the parish hall. Days will cover basic leadership skills, child protection & many other skills needed to be a good leader. RSVP to ym@stbernadette.org.au.

LIFE Nights (grades 9 -12) and Into LIFE (grades 7-8) are on holidays till after Summer Camp. Keep an eye online at <http://www.stbernadette.org.au/> or join our Facebook groups:

Into LIFE - St. Bernadette's, Castle Hill & LIFE Nights - St Bernadette's Parish, Castle Hill

Young Adults (ages 18-35yrs) will be back in the new year. In the mean time join the Facebook group: **Young Adults Combined.**

Point to Ponder:

Luke 2:51 "Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them". Jesus, who is God of all was perfectly obedient to his parent. We see again a perfect example for our lives.

Pray For:

Summer Camp is coming fast, pray that all the leaders & teens have an amazing time away.

Need some inspiration or some faith facts? This fantastic web site is for you – www.lifeteen.com.



When someone asks what you want for Christmas, ask for something special. Ask them to give blood, it's the greatest gift of all. Do something special. Call the Red Cross Blood Service on 13 14 95 or visit donateblood.com.au.

Prayer for the Year of the Priest, 2009 - 2010

Lord our God,
We give thanks for those you have called to lead your people in the ways of faith.
Grant to them good health, peace and joy.
May they be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Bernadette's Parish Community
Parish House, 367 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill, NSW 2154

Telephone 9634 2622 Fax 9899 3511 Email: admin@stbernadette.org.au
 Web page: http://www.stbernadette.org.au

Parish Staff

Fr John Boyle, Parish Priest
 Fr Eugene Szondi, Assistant Priest
 Sr Judy McLeod, rsm, Pastoral Associate
 Mr Luke Hackett, Pastoral Associate (Youth)
 Mrs Frances Gallagher, Office Manager
 Mrs Monica Rubic, Parish Secretary (Finance: Mon-Thu)
 Mr Darren Edwards, Maintenance

Mass Times for this Week

Sunday Sat 6.00pm
 Sun 7.30am, 9.00am, 10.30am &
 6pm Parish LIFE TEEN Youth Mass

Weekdays Mon 6.45am
 Tue 6.45am,
 Wed 6.45am, 9.15am
 Thurs 6.45am, 9.15am
 Fri 6.45am, 9.15am
 Sat 8.00am

Mass on Public Holidays at 8.00am

Reconciliation Sat 8.30am-9.00am; 4.30pm-5.30pm

Baptisms and Marriages: By appointment only. Contact the Parish House. Please note the Church law: Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptised in the first few weeks. As soon as possible after the birth or even before it, they are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared properly for it. [Can. 867 §1]

St Bernadette's Parish School: Mr Paul Colyer, Principal 9634 2898

Please pray for Nola Mary Baulkin who has died recently.

Prayers for the Sick: Adeline Chong, Mick Daly, Monique Guy and Rita Gatt.

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND – January 9 & 10

ACOLYTES/ SERVERS	LECTORS	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION
VIGIL Special Roster	Vanessa D'Emanuele Martin Collins Clare Budge	Iciar Quintana, Cathy & Mark Richmond, Alf Jacobs, Carmel James, Stephen & Janice MacMahon, Don & Remie de Leon
7.30AM Special Roster	Anne Parker Colleen Baines Matthew Troy	Patricia Bright, Hilary Burton, Margaret Elder, Ken Short, Peter Grace
9.00AM Special Roster	David Green Von Lulan Mike Lulan	Stephen Suen, Howard Woodward, Janice Bonaccorso, Marcia Bosen, Shane Robinson, Rosalind Yeo, Elizabeth Vasta, Angela Stenglin, Patricia Williams
10.30AM Special Roster	Bill Gleeson Elizabeth Fogolin Michael Puckeridge	Marion MacDonald, Mila Mina, Michael Puckeridge, Florina Vanderwaals, Barbara Shannon, Wendy Stone, Tony & Wendy Smith, Barry Halpin

6.00 PARISH LIFE TEEN YOUTH MASS MINISTRY ROSTER - January 10

Adult Servers	Extraordinary Ministers of Communion	Musos
Julia Calixto Michael Smith	Alfonso Aquilera Belinda Lee Bill Clasquin Brenda Clasquin Julie Ferry	Bass Erich Gracias Flor Piano Alice Bradshaw Guitar Daniel Ang
Lectors Gillian Pak Leanne Pak Mitchell Waters	Marc Clasquin Maria Aquilera Tina Muscat Tony Muscat Vanessa Muscat	Singers Alison Wong Annabel Irawan Monique O'Callaghan Sara Ang Veronica Sahabu Adam Chioatto Bec Burrowes
Altar Servers Special Roster	Projectionist Josh Becker	Horns/Strings/ Winds Matthew Ashton
Gift Preparation Caitlin Chaney	Ushers Glen Ferry Alfonso Aquilera	Welcomers Darren Edwards Monica O'Callaghan

CHILDREN'S LITURGY School Holidays No Children's Liturgy	CHURCH HOUSEKEEPING Marion Heron, Marjorie Anderson, Caroline Higgins, Bernadette Logue	COUNTING (2nd Collection) Howard Woodward, Helen Wilson, John Giorgiutti, Joseph Boudib
FLOWER ROSTER Wedding	COUNTING (1st Collection) Bert Hofstaetter Helga Hofstaetter	BOOKSHOP Joanne Barrett / Catherine Seddon / Bernadette Navarra / Barbara Halpin