



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Library of the Apostolic Palace

Wednesday, 6 January 2021

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany, that is, the manifestation of the Lord to all peoples: in fact, the salvation wrought by Christ knows no boundaries; it is for everyone. The Epiphany is not an additional mystery, it is still the same mystery as the Nativity, viewed, however, from the dimension of light: the light that illumines every man and woman, the light to be *welcomed* in faith and the light to be *brought to others* in charity, through witness, in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Isaiah's vision, reported in today's Liturgy (cf. 60:1-6), resounds in our time and is more timely than ever: "darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness the peoples" (cf. v. 2). With this background, the prophet announces the light: the light given by God to Jerusalem and destined to illuminate the path of all the peoples. This light has the power to attract everyone, near and far; everyone sets out on the path to reach it (cf. v. 3). It is a vision that opens the heart, that makes it easier to breathe, that invites hope. Certainly, darkness is present and threatening in everyone's life and in the history of humanity, but God's light is more powerful. It is a matter of welcoming it so that it might shine on everyone. But we can ask ourselves: where is this light? The prophet glimpsed it from afar, but that was already enough to fill the heart of Jerusalem with irrepressible joy.

Where is this light? The Evangelist Matthew, in his turn, recounting the episode of the Magi (cf. 2:1-12), shows that this light is the Babe of Bethlehem; it is Jesus, even if his kingship was not

accepted by everyone. Rather some rejected it, like Herod. He is the star who appeared on the horizon, the awaited Messiah, the One through whom God would establish his kingdom of love, his kingdom of justice, his kingdom of peace. He was born not only for some, but for all men and women, for all peoples. The light is for all peoples, salvation is for all peoples.

And how does this “irradiation” happen? How does Christ’s light shine in every place and at all times? It has its own method of disseminating. It does not do so through the powerful means of this world’s empires which always seek to seize power. No, the light of Christ spreads through the proclamation of the Gospel. Proclamation, word, and witness. And with this same “method” chosen by God to come among us: incarnation, that is, by drawing near to the other, encountering the other, assuming the reality of the other and bringing the witness of our faith, each one. This is the only way that the light of Christ, who is Love, can shine in those who welcome it and attract others. Christ’s light does not expand only through words, through phony, commercial methods... No, no. Faith, word and witness: this is how the light of Christ expands. The star is Christ, but we too can and must be the star for our brothers and our sisters, as witnesses of the treasures of goodness and of infinite mercy which the Redeemer offers freely to everyone. The light of Christ does not expand through proselytism. It expands through witness, through the confession of the faith. Also through martyrdom.

Therefore, the condition is to welcome this light within, to welcome it ever increasingly. Woe if we think we possess it; woe if we think we only need to “manage” it! Like the Magi, we too are called to allow ourselves to be fascinated, attracted, guided, illuminated and converted by Christ: it is the journey of faith, through prayer and the contemplation of the works of God, which continually fill us with joy and wonder, an ever new wonder. That wonder is always the first step to go forward in this light.

Let us invoke the protection of Mary over the universal Church, so that the Gospel of Christ, the light of all peoples, the light of all communities, may spread throughout the entire world.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I am following with attention and concern the events in the Central African Republic where elections recently took place, through which the people have manifested the desire to pursue the path of peace. I invite all of the parties to a fraternal and respectful dialogue, to reject hatred and to avoid any form of violence.

I warmly address the brothers and sisters of the Oriental Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, who, according to their tradition celebrate the Nativity of the Lord tomorrow. I offer them my most heartfelt wishes for a Holy Christmas in the light of Christ our peace and our hope.

On today's feast of the Epiphany we celebrate the World Day of Missionary Childhood which involves many children and young people throughout the world. I thank each one of them and I encourage them to be joyful witnesses of Jesus, seeking to always bring fraternity among your peers.

I cordially greet all of you who are linked through various means of communication. A special greeting goes to the "Three Kings Procession" Foundation that organizes events of evangelization and solidarity in numerous cities and villages in Poland and in other nations.

I wish you all a happy Feast Day! Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci.