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Good News!

January 8, 2012
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
Is 60:1-6 / Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 / Mt 2:1-12

You're sitting in a lawyer's office for the reading of your parents' will. You expect to be splitting your inheritance with your siblings, but then you're told you'll also be sharing it with someone unrelated to you—someone you find quite distasteful. Wouldn't you be shocked? speechless? furious?

That's exactly what happened to the first followers of Christ, who were Jewish. God's chosen people, they believed that Christ came to redeem the children of Israel. And indeed he did. But as we hear today from Saint Paul, Christ also came for the Gentiles—the non-Jews. Saint Paul writes, "The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus." This was difficult for Jesus' Jewish followers to absorb. The Gentiles were not related to the Jews by bloodline, so how could they also be chosen by God for Christ?

The Gospel story of the Magi also brought home this truth. The magi were Gentiles, and their coming signaled that Jesus was a light to *all* nations, not just Israel.

This message of inclusivity was hard for Jesus' Jewish followers to hear, and it's difficult to hear today. How much time do Christians spend bickering among ourselves, labeling each other "conservative" or "liberal" and demonizing those we consider "less Christian"?

Today's feast demands better of us. Until we give up the infighting, we're shrouded in darkness. Epiphany is about celebrating the light that Jesus is for all, and the light we Christians are called to be—together, as coheirs, copartners, and brothers and sisters in Christ.

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