Happy New Years everyone.....and welcome to this Mass that celebrates the Epiphany of the Lord. Epiphany.YrA.2025

Webster's Dictionary defines Epiphany as
an "illuminating discovery, a new realization,
or a positive disclosure."
Epiphany is about Light revealed.
Just 2 Sundays ago Fr. Martin started singing
"Christ Be Our Light" in his homily.
I will spare your ears and not sing
but I hope I will "shed some light" on these readings today.

"Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem. Your Light has come."
With these words from the Prophet Isaiah,
the Church announces the heart of today's Feast.
There is to be a light revealed to all nations.
God promises "Nations shall walk by your light
and kings by your shining radiance."
This is a prophesy fulfilled today in the Gospel.
Today we read that Wise Men from distant lands
are drawn by a star to go see the Child Jesus.

The Gospel Story today tells us of Magi from the East
coming to Jerusalem arriving on their camels.
The Gospel does not tell us how many Magi came
or that they were even Kings.
Magi really describe a group of astrologers...
dream interpreters...and scholars.
They were on a journey following a star
to find the newborn King of the Jews.
This star shown bright in the sky.

King Herod hears of the Magi's arrival, greets them,
and convinces them that he also
wants to pay homage to the newborn king.
The Magi did find the Child
with Mary, his mother and with Joseph.
The Magi offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
I think this is how the Magi story morphed into the 3 Kings story
because the gifts were expensive and could only be bought by Kings.
In a dream the Magi did not return to Herod.
If you read further down, Chapter 2 of Matthew, you discover why.
It says…"When Herod realized
that he had been deceived by the Magi he became furious.
He ordered the massacre of all the boys
in Bethlehem and its vicinity…2 years old and under."
Herod was a jealous tyrant that ordered
the slaughter of Innocents to keep his power.

So, what can we learn from the Magi journey?
The Magi were not Jews.
They were Gentiles, people from foreign lands.
The Gospel of Matthew bookends the story of the Magi coming to
worship Jesus with the Risen Lord's command:
"Make disciples of ALL nations...baptizing
in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit."
The coming of Jesus was a blessing for all mankind.

We learned today from the 2nd Reading...
A Letter from Paul to the Ephesians...
It reads…"It has been revealed that the Gentiles
are co-heirs, members of the same body.
Jesus came for the salvation of the whole world.

We also learn from the Magi that we, you and me,
are on a journey to find the Christ Child...to pay Him homage.
Our spiritual journey can never be idle.
We must always be moving to a closer relationship with Jesus.

At this time of year, it is the custom of many
to make New Year's Resolutions, which too often are broken in a week.
These resolutions are usually pretty superficial...
lose weight...exercise more...start a hobby.
Wouldn't it be wonderful if your resolution
was a to start a new journey to be transformed
into a **Dynamic Disciple of Christ?**
To resolve to **BELIEVE** that Jesus is God
and came into the world for the salvation of all.
Let's resolve to **GROW** spiritually in this belief in Jesus.
Let's resolve to **GATHER** at His table
to **LEAD** all of us to a life of **LOVE**.
Now that's a worthy resolution!

You know… Every journey starts with one small step.
A spiritual journey could start with just taking your Bible
off the shelf and putting it on the table where you eat.
If you are going to nourish your body with food...
why not nourish your soul with the Word of God...
one short little passage each day?

Like the Magi…let's journey in search of the Newborn King.
May our lives be a constant journey
towards a closer relationship with God…
as disciple of his Son, Jesus