

## **The Epiphany of the Lord – 01-02-2022**

“When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is the new born king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.’”

Our Lord spoke to the magi in a way that was understandable to them. He guided them by a star, which ironically led them first to King Herod whose only desire would be the death of this newborn king.

But when the magi found Jesus and had paid him homage and were about to depart to their own land they received a warning in a dream not to return to Herod so they departed for their country by another way.

Again, our Lord spoke to them in a way that was most understandable to them.

Today our Lord is speaking to a large number of people in a way that they seem to be able to best understand. It’s not so unlike what we heard in the gospel today.

I called a friend of mine on Friday because I wanted to hear again his story on how he made his way into the Catholic Church. He was a practicing Muslim but had become dismayed with the inconsistencies in the teachings of Islam.

Eventually he left Islam but was unwilling to give up on his belief in God. So like the magi, his search for Truth began. Here are just some of the highlights his journey that brought about his conversion to Christ and into the Catholic faith.

Through conversations with a fellow fraternity brother he began to learn about Catholicism. On a pretty spectacular side note, this fraternity brother eventually became a Catholic priest.

Anyway, the Lord was speaking to my friend in a way that he could best understand but at the time he wasn't ready to come into the faith so his search for Truth continued.

Of course many other things occurred but on one occasion he was asked to attend Mass with friends and it just so happened that the bishop of the diocese was the main celebrant and his homily was all about why Catholicism, among all the world's religions, is the best.

My friend actually felt like the bishop was talking directly to him, as if someone had put him up to it.

But here is the event that I really want to emphasize today. On the feast of our Lady of Guadalupe another friend invited him to Mass at her parish for the big feast.

In the course of the Mass he started thinking that all this emphasis on Mary was just a bunch of paganism.

And yet after Mass he went in procession with an image of our Lady of Guadalupe and during the procession everyone was told to simply voice their petitions.

He said to himself, "Well, since I've come this far I might as well go all the way and he asked Jesus to reveal himself to him and made an act of faith in our Lord.

He said, suddenly everything around him went white almost like being in the most severe snowstorm imaginable.

He felt suspended in time. His friend told him later that he had stopped and grabbed her arm so hard that she didn't know what to do and yet the crowd just processed by as if everything was normal.

He said during his vision he had the sense that something or someone was pursuing him very aggressively.

He said he was running blindly trying to get away from whatever it was when suddenly he saw something shimmering in the distance so he ran toward it just hoping to escape.

When he got there he could see that it was our Lady and she told him that from now on he was going to serve her Son and him alone.

Suddenly something grabbed him from behind with immense power and he said he turned around and it was Jesus.

This is the true story of my friend who went from Muslim to Catholic and how the Lord spoke to him in the way he could best understand.

But his is just one story. It's estimated that six million Muslims are coming to Christ every year. Many are experiencing dreams and visions of Jesus and our Lady. You can find these stories all over the internet.

My friend said Muslims are very open to dreams and visions so it's not surprising to him that our Lord is speaking to them in this way – it's the way that is understandable to them.

Bishop Fulton Sheen said this day would come. The Muslim people will find Christ because the Muslim people desire true worship of the one God and Christ, who is God, is seeking them.

The word epiphany comes from a Greek verb meaning "to reveal," and all the events celebrated by this feast are revelations of Christ to Man.

Today on this feast of the Epiphany of our Lord let's pray in a special way for the Muslim people that Jesus Christ would continue to reveal himself to them even more.

Imagine what this world will be like when they come to Christ. And through our prayers we can help bring this about.