



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Thursday, 6 January 2000

Solemnity of the Epiphany

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Today's Gospel speaks about the Magi who, guided by a star, came from the East to adore Jesus in Bethlehem. It is the Epiphany of Christ, that is, his manifestation to all peoples. The Messiah is born of David's lineage, thus fulfilling the prophets' promises, but his message of salvation is universal: the glory of Israel and light for all peoples (cf. *Lk 2: 32*).

Today's solemnity therefore reveals the universal vocation of the Church, which is called to reflect the light of the Lord on her face. In this liturgical and spiritual context, I ordained *12 new Bishops* this morning from various countries of the world. As I again offer them my fervent good wishes, I invite you to pray that in their ministry they may always be authentic witnesses to the Gospel and wise and generous leaders of God's People.

2. My thoughts now turn to the Christian East, where my brothers in faith, the Patriarchs of the Orthodox Churches, live and proclaim the Gospel: in Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow, Romania, Georgia and every other land where these Churches sing the praises of the Word of God made man. I would like to name them one by one, while expressing the ardent hope that the light of Christ, whose birth they are celebrating at this time, will give them in abundance all that can strengthen the proclamation of the one Gospel of salvation.

To the Orthodox Churches and to the Eastern Catholic Churches which celebrate Christ's birth tomorrow, I wish a Happy Christmas in the words of a troparion well known to them: "Your birth, O Christ our God, made the light of truth shine in the world ... Guided by a star they came to adore you, the sun of justice, and to acknowledge you, the heavenly dawn. O Lord, glory to you".

3. Thinking of all the Churches of the Christian East, I offer them my wishes for prosperity and joy. I do so while participating in spirit in the song of their Liturgies and sharing in the many gifts the Lord has lavished on their traditions and which enrich the Church of Christ.

At the beginning of this new year, as we fervently observe the Great Jubilee, we entrust to Mary, the "*Morning Star*", the Church's evangelizing mission and the journey of Christians toward the full unity desired by our Redeemer.

After praying the Angelus the Holy Father said: I extend a warm greeting to you, dear faithful who have come for the ordination of the new Bishops, and I cordially bless the Ecclesial Communities to which you belong. I greet the participants in the "*Viva la Befana*" folkloric parade, which follows that of last Sunday's Magi Kings on route to Cori and Giulianello. These initiatives remind everyone of the value of pilgrimages, the symbol of the journey of conversion and an essential element of the Jubilee. I would especially like to mention the young people of Ischia, gathered in the cathedral for a diocesan jubilee celebration and joined to us by radio and television. Dear young people, I affectionately greet you and your Pastor, Bishop Filippo Strofaldi. May the visit of the World Youth Day pilgrim Cross to your beautiful island strengthen all of you in the faith and joy of being the Lord's disciples. I await you in Rome for the Great Jubilee of young people next August.

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