

Year C
Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord
(Is 60:1-6; Ps 72; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12)

We yet again hear the same readings on this feast, and must ask ourselves what the living God, who unceasingly converses with his children (or with his spouse the Church) in the Holy Scriptures, inviting us and taking us up into his “society” (Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation, nos. 2, 8, 21), means to say to us.

Mt, a very Jewish gospel, probably engages in a form of Jewish interpretation called *midrash*, in which one searches the Scriptures in order to illustrate and interpret one passage by another. The star of Bethlehem was the messianic star of Nm 24:17. Joined to this star (kings were often thought to be divine, like the astral deities; see the connection between messiah-king and sun in Ps 72:17) was the scepter, a symbol of power and governance. This scepter in Nm 24:17 is the same as that in Gen 49:10. In the following verse, Gen 49:11, the tied “double-donkey” is the same as that untied for Jesus’ the messianic entry, based in turn on Zech 9:9-10, which uses language very similar to our Ps 72, perhaps *the* messianic psalm *par excellence*. It speaks of the righteous king who in the End time will execute justice upon the earth, implementing God’s divine plan, and thus being like God himself. This will usher in the healing of the world, manifested in ecological ways. God’s salvation encompasses everything, there is no area of human concern —especially that which affects the poor most— that must not be repaired, healed and thus “saved.”

What or who is the Jerusalem in the first reading? In the Jewish tradition, whose interpretation is a “possible one” (see the 2002 document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, II.A.7.22, the actual city may be referred to. Christians tend to make “Jerusalem” a symbol or type of our heavenly destiny, as in Gal 4:22-26; Rev 21. God is in this future Jerusalem, “future” for both Jew and Christian. This mystery of which the second reading speaks is both a promise and a task for us. In this we are helped by the one who contained in her womb what the very heavens cannot (1 Kgs 8:27), the *Platytera* (“broader than”), Mary our Mother.