



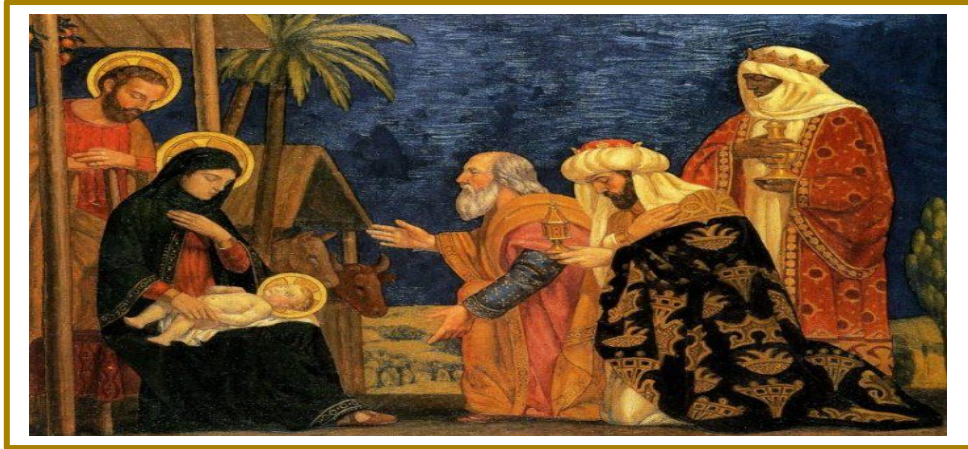
Our Lady of Purgatory

Maronite Catholic Church



January 6-7, 2024

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY



THE MAGI

Oftentimes, the English translations of the Bible use the word "astrologers" for "magi." In Greek, the original language of the Gospel, the word *magos* (*magoi*, plural) has four meanings: (1) a member of the priestly class of ancient Persia, where astrology and astronomy were prominent in Biblical times; (2) one who had occult knowledge and power, and was adept at dream interpretation, astrology, fortune-telling, divination and spiritual mediation; (3) a magician; or (4) a charlatan, who preyed upon people using the before-mentioned practices. From these possible definitions and the description provided in the gospel, the Magi were probably Persian priest-astrologers who could interpret the stars, particularly the significance of the star that proclaimed the birth of the Messiah. (Even the ancient historian Herodotus (d. 5th century B.C.) would attest to the astrological prowess of the priestly class of Persia.)

More importantly, the visit of the Magi fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament: Balaam prophesied about the

coming Messiah marked by a star: "I see him, though not now; I behold him, though not near: A star shall advance from Jacob and a staff shall rise from Israel..." (Nm 24:17). Psalm 72 speaks of how the Gentiles will come to worship the Messiah: "The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts, the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute. All kings shall pay Him homage, all nations shall serve Him" (Ps 72:10-11). Isaiah also prophesied the gifts: "Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold, frankincense and proclaiming the praises of the Lord" (Is 60:6).

St. Matthew recorded that the Magi brought three gifts, each also having a prophetic meaning: gold, the gift for a king; frankincense, the gift for a priest; and myrrh — a burial ointment, a gift for one who would die. St. Irenaeus (d. 202) in his *Adversus haereses* offered the following interpretation for the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh respectively: King, God and Suffering Redeemer as well as virtue, prayer and suffering.

Traditionally, we think of the three Magi as the three kings. We usually have the three kings in our nativity sets. We even sing, "We three kings of orient are..." Here the three gifts, Psalm 72 and the rising star in the East converge to render the Magi as three kings traveling from the East.

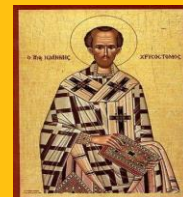
Actually, the earliest tradition is inconsistent as to the number of the Magi. The Eastern tradition favored twelve Magi. In the West, several of the early Church fathers — including Origen, St. Leo the Great and St. Maximus of Turin — accepted three Magi. Early Christian painting in Rome found at the cemetery of Sts. Peter and Marcellinus depicts two magi and at the cemetery of St. Domitilla, four.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body.

As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die."

Saint Peter Chrysologus



Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon

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OFFICE HOURS: The Church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

Since the seventh century in the Western Church, the Magi have been identified as Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. A work called the Excerpta et Collectanea attributed to St. Bede (d. 735) wrote, "The magi were the ones who gave gifts to the Lord. The first is said to have been Melchior, an old man with white hair and a long beard... who offered gold to the Lord as to a king. The second, Caspar by name, young and beardless and ruddy complexioned... honored Him as God by his gift of incense, an oblation worthy of divinity. The third, black-skinned and heavily bearded, named Balthasar ... by his gift of myrrh testified to the Son of Man who was to die." An excerpt from a Medieval saint's calendar printed in Cologne read, "Having undergone many trials and fatigues for the Gospel, the three wise men met at Sewa (Sebaste in Armenia) in A.D. 54 to celebrate the feast of Christmas. Thereupon, after the celebration of Mass, they died: St. Melchior on Jan. 1, aged 116; St. Balthasar on Jan. 6, aged 112; and St. Caspar on Jan. 11, aged 109." The Roman Martyrology also lists these dates as the Magi's respective feast days.

Emperor Zeno brought the relics of the Magi from Persia to Constantinople in 490. Relics (whether the same or others) appeared in Milan much later and were kept at the Basilica of St. Eustorgius. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, who plundered Italy, took the relics to Cologne in 1162, where they remain secure to this day in a beautiful reliquary housed in the Cathedral.

Even though some mystery remains to the identity of the Magi, the Church respects their act of worship: The Council of Trent, when underscoring the reverence that must be given to the Holy Eucharist, decreed, "The faithful of Christ venerate this most holy sacrament with the worship of latria which is due to the true God... For in this sacrament, we believe that the same God is present whom the eternal Father brought into the world, saying of Him, 'Let all God's angels worship Him.' It is the same God whom the Magi fell down and worshiped, and finally, the same God whom the apostles adored in Galilee as Scripture says" (Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, 5).

As we celebrate Christmas and the Feast of the Epiphany, we too must be mindful of our duty to adore our Lord through prayer, worship, and self-sacrificing good

works. St. Gregory Nazianzen (d. 389) preached, "Let us remain on in adoration; and to Him, who, in order to save us, humbled Himself to such a degree of poverty as to receive our body, let us offer not only incense, gold and myrrh..., but also spiritual gifts, more sublime than those which can be seen with the eyes" (Oratio, 19).

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-magi.html>

IN OUR PRAYERS

Beverly Parlapiano, Anne Ramundo, Michael Bruce, Magda Moosa, Alice Daher, Sharon Conti, David Techlin, Debbie Freedenberg, Josephine Chedid, Efrangieh Daou, Reggie Thomas, Peter Helmer, Renee Helmer, Natalya Sarkis, Octavia David, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Angela Scorza-Anderson, Theresa John, Laurette Bou Ramia, Annie Peter, Mariam David, Norma Thomas, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues, Edmond Salameh, Ed Da Rocha, and Alice Daher. If anyone is missing from this list, please contact the Church office.

WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY

It is my sad duty to inform you that Ronald Cornell, the father of Elizabeth Chedid, passed away December 17. We extend our condolences to Wassim and Elizabeth Chedid, their children, and Elizabeth's mother and siblings.

Mr. Cornell was born in Fall River, son of the late David and Claire (Donais) Cornell, and had resided in the Walpole, Wrentham, and Wareham areas for most of his life. Prior to retirement, he was CFO for the former Norwood Hospital. He also owned/operated Shaws Cove Liquors, Fairhaven.

Memorial visitation to which relatives and friends are invited will be Thursday, January 11, 2024, at the **Potter Funeral Home, 81 Reed Road, Westport, MA 02790 from 5-7 P.M.**

Interment and service will be private.

We ask Almighty God to give consolation to his family and may his soul rest in peace. Allah yerhammo.

SAINT MARON'S DAY

HAFLI

Tickets are on sale for our annual Saint Maron's Day Hafli which will be held on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at our Parish Center. Come and enjoy great food, music, dancing, and more. The flyer is attached with all the information. Thank you for your support.

OUR LADY OF PURGATORY MARONITE CHURCH

ST. MARON'S HAFLI

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- CHURCH OFFICE: (508) 996-8934
- SOUSOU: (508) 916-1523

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, January 6, @ 4:30 PM. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of Julia Maroon and her family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

Sunday, January 7, @ 10:30 AM, (Praises of Saint John the Baptist). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of Samir and Georgette Sawaya requested by Zakhia and Hiba Chdid. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of the deceased members of the Chomak Family requested by the family. May their souls rest in peace.

Saturday, January 13, @ 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Jacob of Nisibis). Liturgy is being offered for the living and deceased members of Mariam David family requested by Mariam David and family.

Sunday, January 14, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of John and Theresa Samia requested by family. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of Nacklie and Marie Nessralla requested by family. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Mansour Barbour requested by Norma Jean Barbour and Family. May his soul rest in peace.

SAINT JOSEPH SODALITY NEWS

Periodically we will be publishing news and coming events from the St. Joseph Sodality. The Sodality is the oldest organization in the Parish, having been founded in 1918. Through their devotion to St. Joseph, Sodality Members seek to emulate the life and faith of St. Joseph, and by doing so, hope to achieve eternal happiness as he did. The Sodality encourages you to consider becoming a member.

CONFESSION

Please know that confession is available before liturgies. You may also call to set up an appointment.

FINANCE COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Jimmy Kalife, Wassim Chedid, Rose Dupre, Rana Choubah, Nigel Hitchings, and Joseph Barckett.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Fadi Bark, Johnny Kalife, Vicki Thomas Marini, Jacques Barbour, and Smitty Cabral.

WINE AND HOST OFFERING

The altar bread and wine for the month of January is offered for Mansour Barbour requested by Norma Jean Barbour and family.

LECTORS FOR JANUARY 2024

Saturday, January 6,

Rachael Higgins

Intercessions: Anna & Helen Higgins

Sunday, January 7,

John Barbour/ Hiba Chdid

Saturday, January 13,

Eric Tavares

Intercessions: Smitty Cabral

Sunday, January 14,

Mae Dickinson/ Gaby Baroody

Saturday, January 20,

Annemarie Espindola

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, January 21,

Ann Dupre/ Jano Baroody

Saturday, January 27,

Mae Dickinson

Intercessions: Smitty Cabral

Sunday, January 28,

Rana Choubah/ Joumana Chedid

(If you are not able to read on your given day, please contact Mae Dickinson).

MYO EPIPHANY PARTY

Calling all MYO and parents! To kick off the new year, we will be having a special evening for the MYO of OLOP. All youth aged 12-18 are invited to come for dinner, discussion, and games on Saturday, January 13. Our gatherings are going to be geared to you and the things that you may be going through. I encourage you to come and see what is in store for the MYO in the future. Mark your calendars and join us.

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE BURNS FOR....

This week the sanctuary candle burns for a special intention by Jacques and Amal Barbour. Anyone who would like to offer the sanctuary candle for a loved one or special intention, this will be offered each week. An offering of a \$10.00 donation is appreciated.

DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF 01/08-01/13/24

Monday:

2 Corinthians 10: 12-18

Mark 1: 1-8

Tuesday:

2 Corinthians 11: 1-6

John 1: 19-28

Wednesday:

2 Corinthians 11: 7-15

John 3: 22-30

Thursday:

2 Corinthians 11: 18,22-30

John 3: 31-36

Friday:

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Matthew 14: 1-12

Saturday:

2 Corinthians 12: 11-16

John 10: 40-42

WEEK OF DECEMBER 30-31, 2023

Sunday Collection	\$ 3,061.00
Donations	\$ 5,000.00
Online Giving	\$ 1,513.57
Dedication Ad Book	\$ 250.00
Candles	\$ 19.00
Total	\$ 7,943.57

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY BY SENDING IN YOUR WEEKLY COLLECTIONS VIA MAIL. THIS HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL FOR THE CHURCH. GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

Save the date



Myo Epiphany Party

Open to Teens & Parents

January 13, 2024 | 6:00-9:00pm

Our Lady of Purgatory Church Hall
4254 Achusnet Ave New Bedford.

Dinner | Games | Discussion

RSVP to Fr. Vince or Sr. Therese by January 10

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Eternally in our hearts and in our thoughts. We miss seeing your face, hearing your voice, seeing your smile and hearing your laugh. We cherish the day we will join you in GOD's Heavenly Kingdom. We Love you and miss you even more with each passing day.

Joseph & Marie Kenyon

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