



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Tuesday, 6 January 1998

1. *“Arise, shine, Jerusalem; for your light has come” (Is 60:1).*

Jerusalem, welcome the Light! Welcome the One who is the Light: “God from God, Light from Light..., begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man” (*Profession of Faith*). Jerusalem, welcome this Light!

This “light shines in the darkness” (*Jn 1:5*) and men already see it from afar. Look, they have set out on a journey. By following the star, they go towards this Light which was made manifest in Christ. They journey; they search for the road; they ask the way. They arrive at Herod’s court. They ask where the king of the Jews has been born: “We have seen his star ... and have come to worship him” (*Mt 2:2*).

2. *Jerusalem, protect your Light!* He who was born in Bethlehem is in danger. Having heard that a king was born, Herod immediately considers how to eliminate someone he believes to be a rival to the throne. But Jesus is saved from this threat and flees with his family to Egypt, far from the king’s murderous hand. He will later return to Nazareth, and at 30 years of age he will begin to teach. Everyone will then know that the Light has come into the world and it will be seen that “his own people received him not” (*Jn 1:11*).

Jerusalem, you did not defend the Light of the world. You prepared a shameful death for Christ. He was crucified, and then taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb. After sunset the *patibulum crucis* remained on Golgotha. Jerusalem, you did not defend your Light. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (*Jn 1:5*). But look! On the third day Christ rose again. The darkness of death did not keep him.

Arise, shine, Jerusalem. Jerusalem, arise together with the one who has returned from the grave. Welcome the risen

King, who has come to announce the kingdom of God and who wondrously established it on earth!

3. *Jerusalem, share your Light!* Share with all men this Light that shines in the darkness. Extend your invitation to everyone; be for all humanity the star that shows them the way to a new Christian millennium, just as once it guided the Magi of the East to the stable in Bethlehem. Invite everyone, so that “nations” may walk “by your light, and kings by the brightness of your rising” (*Is 60:3*). Share your Light! Share this Light that shone in you with all men, with all the nations of the earth.

From this perspective I turn to you, dear Brothers, who are today receiving your episcopal ordination: be faithful ministers of the new evangelization, which spreads the light of Christ in the world.

You, Archbishop Mario Francesco Pompedda, have been in the service of the Holy See for many years: continue with your characteristic skill to fulfil your task as Dean of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, devoting yourself with pastoral spirit to the application of canonical justice.

May you, Archbishop Marco Dino Brogi, confidently assume your new tasks as Apostolic Nuncio in Sudan and Apostolic Delegate in Somalia, and represent the Pope's concern for those Churches that, not without difficulties and anxiety, proclaim Christ and his Gospel.

To you, Bishop Peter Kwaku Atuahene, is entrusted the mission of bringing the light of Christ to the Ghanaian Diocese of Goaso, of which you are the first Bishop.

You, Bishop Filippo Strofaldi, will take it instead to the Italian Diocese of Ischia.

And you, Bishop Wiktor Skworc, will spread it in Diocese of Tarnów, Poland.

The Church calls you, Bishop Franco Dalla Valle, to spread the light of the Gospel as the first Bishop of Juína, Brazil.

She sends you, Bishop Angelito R. Lampon, to fulfil your missionary vocation in Jolo, the Philippines, as successor of your brother, the late Bishop Benjamin de Jesus, barbarously killed 11 months ago near the cathedral.

You, Bishop Tomislav Koljatic Maroevic, will assist in the pastoral mission of the Archbishop of Concepción, Chile, as his Auxiliary.

And you, Bishop Francesco Saverio Salerno, as Secretary of the Prefecture for the Economic Affairs of the Holy See, will continue your work of service to the Apostolic See in the administrative field.

To each of you, dear brothers, goes my warm embrace, with the assurance of a remembrance in my prayer and with a special blessing, which will always accompany you in your ecclesial service.

4. Jerusalem, behold the day of your epiphany! The Magi from the East, who were the first to recognize your Light, offer their gifts to you, Redeemer of the world. They present them to you who are God from God, Light from Light, true God

from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; to you, through whom all things were made; to you, who became man by the power of the Holy Spirit, taking your body from the Virgin Mary.

The eyes of the Magi truly saw you. Today our eyes see you again, as they gaze on the *mysterium* of holy Epiphany.

“Arise, shine, Jerusalem; for your light has come” (Is 60:1).

Amen!

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