

Great Thanksgiving for Epiphany
(Through Other Eyes)

Invitation:

Come and follow the star that arose in the east.
A star that had profound meaning to strangers, to foreigners, to unbelievers.
Learn from their curiosity, humility, and reverence as you come
to this table of the Lord which is open to all.

Confession:

Forgive us for discounting your epiphany given to those who are not like us.
Forgive us for not receiving their experience of You as authentic.
We have missed so much that You have wanted to share with us.
We have ignored Your good news, spoken in languages that were not our own.
Our pride has blinded us. Our exclusiveness has limited us. We have not just closed our
hearts to them, but to You. Forgive us. Open our eyes to the rich experiences You have
given others. Open our minds and make us teachable. Open our hearts that we might fall
on our knees and worship the Christ child beside them. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

One: God is faithful and just and willing to forgive our sins. A contrite heart will never be
turned away. By the authority of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Your sins are washed
away and you have been made whole.

**All: By the authority of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Your sins are washed away and
you have been made whole. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Thanksgiving:

One: God's presence is not hidden from others.

All: It is as clear as a star shining in the night sky for all to see.

One: God's prevenient grace touches every life.

All: God wants none to perish but all to enjoy the joys of eternal life.

One: Lets bring before the Holy One our humble worship.

All: We lay down our gold, our frankincense, and myrrh.

One: We almost missed it.

The natal star was shining but we didn't notice.

It held no meaning for us.

But it did for them, the strangers, those from a distant land,
worshippers with a very different understanding of the divine.

Yet You, O Lord, spoke to them in a language they understood,
showed them signs that held meaning for their eyes,

and inspired their hearts to take a long and dangerous journey to a foreign land.

Thank you, because they helped us to notice,
when they shared your Gospel with us.

Yet still we did not rush to worship you,
instead we thought of You as a threat,

so we prepared an army to come against You,
while they rejoiced in the star.
They brought You precious gifts,
while we brought a sword, fear, and death.
Thank You for the eyes of others,
who saw You when we could not.
Thank You for the hearts of others so filled with joy and wonder
when ours, were not.

Today may we be different and be open to see through the eyes of others.
May we rejoice when we hear that ten thousand tongues are able to sing your praises.
May we learn from what You have taught others even when they understand the world
differently than we do, so we might share in their blessings.
Allow us to join with them in their worship around Your throne as we proclaim together:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Wisdom shared throughout the world.
Your glory shines forth through every language and culture.
You are transforming us all.
Blessed are all who come in your holy name.
You are transforming us all.**

One: In You all things are being made new and Jesus was always open to what was next.
Jesus shut no one out.
Jesus took the time to listen to what demons had to say.
Jesus was not even opposed to discussing scripture with the Devil.
To gain wisdom Jesus took the time to talk with children.
Jesus was open to allowing women to be heard, devout women, Samaritan women,
even Syrophenician women.
Jesus listened to the words of Romans, and tax collectors,
holy men schooled in the law and was willing to ask questions.
Jesus was open to hear the word of God from anyone.
And Jesus felt blessed.

Jesus listened to his disciples boasting of their greatness,
In silence Jesus took the towel and basin
and knelt down before them as a slave
revealing the love of God for the world.

During the telling of the Passover story,
with reverence and prayer, Jesus took the bread.
This bread that was so full of spiritual significance and meaning.
As he broke it he said:
“Take and eat, this is my body broken and given for you.”
Hold this sacred moment in your heart.
After supper with reverence and prayer, Jesus took the cup.
This cup of wine was so full of spiritual significance and meaning.

As he presented it he said:

“Drink with me all of you, this is the cup of my blood,
poured out freely as an offering of praise for God’s eternal covenant of grace,
forgiving not just our sins, but the sins of the entire world.”

Hold this sacred moment in your heart.

We do hold this moment of grace
and our lives are being transformed
causing us to see our lives and the world beyond us
in the light of this holy mystery that we proclaim:

**All: Christ died for everyone.
Christ lives for everyone.
When Christ comes again it will be for everyone.**

One: Star Dust, Distant Light
shine upon these sacred symbols of bread and wine,
allow them to become for us the body and blood of Christ
Your gift to the whole world.

Star Dust, Distant Light
shine upon the sacred gift of our lives,
our questions, our discoveries, our dreams,
allow them to become for the world, Your church,
the renewed body and attentive bride of Christ
Your gift to the whole world.

Star Dust, Distant Light
shine upon all the people of the Choptank Charge.
Make them welcoming to all the wise ones you send their way.
Help them to listen to their message of great joy for all people.
Use them to echo Your good news to every culture and language.

**All: This is our pray of joy
to Jesus who has brought salvation to the whole world.
This is our prayer of peace
to the Holy Spirit who is at work in every life moving us all towards full salvation.
This is our prayer of grace
to the Love who cares for us all, making us all one family throughout the earth.
This is our prayer of consecration
as we commit our lives to be the worship due your name that is praised all around
our globe. Amen.**

One: Now join me in praying according to the pattern Jesus taught us:

**All: God of many names, spoken in many languages, understood by a multitude of
cultures, sacred are these names.**

**May Your great love embrace us all, as You strive to leave none behind.
Give us daily what we need for physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
Forgive us all the times we have reject Your children,
just as we forgive all of those in our family who may reject us.
Help us fight the temptation to exclude anyone,
Instead help us see Your presence in every life.
For Your worship arises from all people, in every language, and culture,
today and always. Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Thank You for sharing with us the epiphany found in this holy mystery in Jesus Christ. We thank You for the strangers who pointed out Your presence to us and helped lead us to Christ. We thank You for how you can take bread, wine and even stars to speak to our hearts. Now send us out, so we might be like the Magi making real Your signs of grace to a waiting world. May all come to bow before you with their worship forever more. Amen.