

When Jesus saw the vast crowd,
his heart was moved with pity for them,
for they were like sheep without a
shepherd;
and he began to teach them many things.

Mark 6

Second Week of Christmas: Jan. 2- 9, 2011

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Second Week of Christmas

On Sunday, January 2, the US will celebrate the **Epiphany of the Lord**, although most of the world will celebrate it on Thursday, January 6. The Epiphany celebrates the light that has come into the darkness of the world and that our salvation was made known to the Gentiles. Outside of the US, the **Second Sunday of Christmas** is celebrated, with the beginning of John's Gospel and its poetic images of light and the Word.

Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious.**

Wednesday is the **Memorial of Saint John Neumann, bishop.** The different days of celebrating the **Epiphany** means that readings are mostly the same, but used on different days during the week.

The **Gospels** this week are from all four gospel writers, **Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.** We read of Jesus traveling through Galilee “teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.” He feeds loaves and fishes to the hungry and exhorts his disciples, “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” when they are caught in a storm at sea. When he reads from the scriptures at the synagogue, he proclaims, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” He meets a leper: “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean.” Jesus heals him. John tells his followers he is not the Christ. “He must increase; I must decrease.”

Daily Prayer This Week

There is a very quick transition after Christmas. We move into Jesus' public life, almost completely passing over the hidden life years. At the end of the week, John is crying out, “The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.”

It helps to recognize this and let ourselves enter this part of the mystery of the Incarnation. We are living in the flesh each day of our lives. He came to enter this life and be with us in it. After Christmas, we have this wonderful Christmas season, days to let the blessing of Christmas settle in before we move toward Ordinary Time again.

Each one of us can begin our new year in this Christmas season, by staying in touch with ourselves in the flesh - as people who are touched by Jesus' coming. We can turn to our Lord throughout each day and have real conversations with our Savior: over the kitchen sink, while doing laundry, in front of the washing machine. This practice can make sacred any part of our “ordinary life” that we hold up to God.

During our preparation for Christmas we asked the Lord to open our hearts, to let us wait with patient trust, and to come to us. Last week we experienced joy and the mixed challenges of Christmas. This week we have the opportunity to have ordinary conversations with our God who came to be with us.

Thank you so much, Lord, for becoming flesh for me. And, thank you for being with me now, in the midst of each day's joys and sorrows. I ask you to increase my trust in you, my desire for closeness with you and my commitment to turn to you all day long. Continue to be with me when I have to

Sunday is the **Baptism of the Lord**. We hear the Lord say in the first reading from **Isaiah**, “Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit.” That is echoed in **Luke's Gospel**, after Jesus' baptism: “And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

This feast marks the end of the **Christmas season** and on Monday we begin **Ordinary Time** on the Church calendar.

make difficult decisions, when I need extra patience and care when in challenging situations. Continue to let my heart experience the joy of Christmas this week as I see signs of your presence with me.

When these words take on our own voice and our details, it will feel very personal. And, when we speak about our fears, our needs, when we express our gratitude and our deep desires, we are living and intimate relationship with the one who became flesh that we might never need feel alone again.

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