



6 January 2019, 8 a.m. | Year C | Epiphany of the Lord |
Children's Mass

Isaiah 60:1-6 | Psalm 72:1-2,7-8,10-13 | Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6 |
Matthew 2:1-12

A DIFFERENT WAY

Introduction

My dear sisters and brothers, my dear children, welcome back to the children's Mass after the Christmas break. I can see that many of you have enjoyed Christmas sweets, as your cheeks have become a little bigger!

Today we celebrate one of the last important feasts of the Christmas season—next Sunday is the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord—but today is an important day that closes the Christmas week of celebrations: the feast of the Epiphany, meaning God showing himself. Let us pray that each one of us may see a little bit of God who shows himself to us at this Mass and in the readings as we hear them.

Homily

My dear children, did you pay attention to the gospel? Do you remember the last phrase that I read in the gospel? 'A different way' – yes, that's correct. The gospel says the Magi went back a different way.

Dear children, you have come to church this morning. Will you go back home a different way? No, unless you have to buy something from the shop after Mass. I was going for a walk one morning, and I saw some dogs near those shops. So I walked a little away from them because I didn't want to disturb them. But as I passed by, a dog got up and almost bit me. Luckily, I was wearing thick trousers, because the dog actually caught hold of my trouser leg. And so now, I'm very careful when I go for a walk. If there are dogs on the road, I go by a different way. I remember when I was younger, there was a little girl in the neighbourhood who was dreadfully frightened of dogs and would always take a different road if there were dogs in her way.

There was once a father whose little son loved ice cream. Whenever he passed by the ice cream shop, his son would insist that he buy him one. When he caught a cold, his mother didn't allow him to eat ice cream and so his father would take a different way so that the little boy would not see the shop and ask for ice cream.

People change their way for a reason. Why do you think the Magi took a different way?
Because Herod had asked them to tell him where Baby Jesus was so he could find him too.

And what would Herod do if he found the baby?
He would kill him.

Yes, that's correct. The Magi did not want to go back to Herod, because Herod was a horrible king, very cruel, and he killed many people. He killed his own wife, his mother-in-law, three of his sons, many of his relatives, and also little children. We celebrated the feast of the Holy Innocents recently. They were innocent children who were killed because Herod was frightened that there was another king and he would lose his kingship. He was a dreadful man. And so, the Magi were warned in a dream to go back by a different way.

Who were the Magi? Were they kings? It is not said in the gospel. They were wise people. They were astrologers who looked at the sky and studied the position of the stars. They were fortune tellers, who were in search of this person who was born. He must have been someone very special for them because there was a

star that showed them the way to his place of birth. The Magi were good people who did not want to meet King Herod again because they were warned in a dream by angels not to go back that way, and so they changed their way back home.

But they also went back by a different way because...whom did they meet? Jesus! After meeting him, they were transformed: they became different people, better people, wiser people who changed their way. Do you know the meaning of 'the way'? Who is called 'The Way' in the gospels? Jesus. He said, 'I am the way'. In the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christians called themselves 'Followers of the Way'. The gospel says in some translations that the Magi went back 'with the way'. They went back with Jesus.

At the end of this Christmas season, God is asking us, 'Have you met Jesus?' If you have met Jesus, you will go back by a different way. You will avoid evil and go back by another way that leads you to good. All of us need to find another way of going back to our lives and our work because we have met Jesus, we have adored him, and we become different people.

I came across a beautiful poem, which I sent as a greeting some years ago, when my Christmas greetings were late. It reads as follows:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

We will now listen to a beautiful song, which invites us all to travel back a different way.

(video)

*Those magic men, the Magi,
Some people call them wise
Or Oriental, even kings
Well anyway, those guys
They visited with Jesus
They sure enjoyed their stay
Then warned in a dream of King Herod's scheme
They went home by another way.*

*Yes they went home by another way
Home by another way
Maybe me and you can be wise guys too
And go home by another way
We can make it another way
Safe home as they used to say
Keep a weather eye to the chart on high
And go home another way*

*Steer clear of royal welcomes
Avoid a big to-do
A king who would slaughter the innocents*

*Will not cut a deal for you
He really, really wants those presents
He'll comb your camel's fur
Until his boys announce they've found trace
amounts
Of your frankincense, gold and myrrh*

*Time to go home by another way
Home by another way
You have to figure the Gods saying play the odds
And go home by another way
We can make it another way
Safe home as they used to say
Keep a weather eye to the chart on high
And go home another way*

*Home is where they want you now
You can more or less assume that you'll be
welcome in the end
Mustn't let King Herod haunt you so*

Or fantasise his features when you're looking at a friend

*Well it pleases me to be here
And to sing this song tonight
They tell me that life is a miracle
And I figured that they're right
But Herod's always out there
He's got our cards on file
It's a lead pipe cinch, if we give an inch
Old Herod likes to take a mile.*

*It's best to go home by another way
Home by another way
We got this far to a lucky star
But tomorrow is another day
We can make it another way
Safe home as they used to say
Keep a weather eye to the chart on high
And go home another way.*

Now that we are finishing the celebration of Christmas, are you going home by another way, a better way because you have met Baby Jesus, and he has changed you and made you a better person? Each one of us must be different. If we are angry people, we must become loving people. If we are fighting people, we must become peace-loving people. By which way am I going back today? Jesus is my way.

Final Blessing

May almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Mass is ended; let us go back by a different way, being better people – a different way shown to us by Baby Jesus. Let us go in his peace and love.
Thanks be to God.



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