

Beloved, if God so loved us,  
 we also must love one another.  
 No one has ever seen God.  
 Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us,  
 and his love is brought to perfection in us.  
 1John 4

## Second Week of Christmas: Jan. 4-10

### The Second Week of Christmas

On Sunday, the US will celebrate the **Epiphany of the Lord**, although most of the world will celebrate it on Tuesday, 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.

Monday 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."

Sunday is the **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." Those words are echoed in the reading from **Mark's Gospel**, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." This feast marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Ordinary Time on the Church calendar.

### Daily Prayer This Week

This week is a time with two special Sundays book-ending the week. Both celebrations offer an "epiphany," an understanding and insight into the essence of who Jesus really is. When the Wisemen visit the poorest of families and find the baby Jesus, they have a clearer idea of what kind of king he will be.

At the Baptism of the Lord the following Sunday, Jesus is baptized and the skies open and the voice of God proclaims, "This is my beloved Son." More than just a prophet, this special relationship with God is made manifest in that moment.

How can we make this week a special one as the Christmas season draws to a close? In some parts of the world daylight is plentiful right now, but for many of us the days are short and the dark of night surrounds us many hours each day. This could be the week to reflect on that darkness and the light that Jesus brings into our hearts.

Each morning as our feet touch the floor next to our beds, we can open our hands briefly in the darkness and ask God to show us the light in our lives. Gratitude is a wonderful way to pray and to recognize the light we sometimes don't notice in our lives. Maybe in this final week of Christmas, we can light a candle at dinner and remember a special blessing we have been given or something we are grateful for in our lives.

*Dear Lord,  
 You came to your disciples when  
 they felt alone on the stormy waters  
 and comforted them with your  
 presence. Be with me today and let  
 my heart be touched by the love  
 you so lavishly give to me. Let me  
 remember to turn to you in my fears  
 and darkness and know that you will  
 heal me.*

