



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center is the ministry center of The Community of the Cross, an intentional community of Christians affiliated with the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America. ALL ARE WELCOME

## St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center **FIRST SUNDAY**

January 2026 Vol 19 Issue 1

2800 Rolston Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46825



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### Weekly Liturgy

11:00 SUNDAY live and on  
ZOOM - email or text Bishop  
John or Fr. Cliff for Zoom link  
2800 Rolston Street  
Fort Wayne

### Evening Prayer

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm on  
Zoom

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## EPIPHANY

The Epiphany is upon us. Strange visitors from the orient are coming to visit the newborn king of the Judeans. A star leads them or as it says in the Revelation of the Magi - a Syriac document housed in the Vatican Library dated around the 8th century CE, a bright light led them. When the Magi are on their way to Jerusalem, they comment, "We had no need of the light of the sun or of the moon, because their light became diminished in [the star's] sight, and by night and by day we walked in its light" (Rev. Magi 16.4). And yet despite the star's apparent brilliance, they also claim that it was visible only to them. They alone are considered "worthy" to see it (Rev. Magi 11.7). According to this account there were 12 Magi and they were descendants of Seth, the son of Adam. They find the child in a cave that looks identical to the Cave of Treasures in the land of Shir which is a place for storing valuable things in their native land.

The author of the Revelation says that the story of the star goes all the way back to the beginning: "Adam instructed Seth his son about . . . the light of the star and about its glory, because he [saw] it in the Garden of Eden when it descended and came to rest over the Tree of Life" (Rev. Magi 6.2). Because of the role that the star plays in the story of the Magi more broadly, it is possible to think about it as a sort of character alongside the Magi, Herod, and others. In this text, however, the star actually does become a character. And not a minor character. In the Revelation of the Magi, the star is Jesus himself.

"The star in this text does more than just announce the birth of Jesus to the Magi and then indicate the direction they are supposed to travel. It prepares campsites for them to use at night, levels mountains that could stand in their way, enables them to cross rivers without worry, and gives them the ability to trample over snakes and beasts without fear. Its light also multiplies their food rations (Rev. Magi 16.5–6). These specific actions of the star are reminiscent of various biblical scenes. The star behaves much like the pillar of fire that guides Moses and the Hebrews (in Exod 17:21–22), and its ability to level mountains echoes prophetic language found in Isaiah (40:4–5). Luke uses this same language to introduce the ministry of John the Baptist: "Every valley will be filled up,

and every mountain and hill will be humbled" (Luke 3:5). Because the star is Jesus, its ability to multiply the provisions of the Magi could be understood as referring to stories about Jesus feeding thousands of people with only a small amount of food."

You can read more about the star and also about the Magi in Eric Vanden Eykel, *The Magi: Who They Were, How They've Been Remembered, and Why They Still Fascinate*. Fortress Press. 2002). It's an interesting read and also talks about other stories of the Magi that also inspire some thought.

One of the fascinating things about these other apocryphal stories is that the Magi often arrive at Bethlehem around the time that Jesus is born.

How do we relate to this star that was around at the time of Jesus' birth? What is its message to us today? Is there one or is it only a message for dreamers?

The Roches ask us a good question for this time of year: **STAR OF WONDER – The Roches**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNbEXZuVmKs>

Star of wonder in the Heavens  
Wonder what you want of me  
Should I follow you tonight  
Star of wonder, Star of wonder

I am just a lonely Sheppard  
Watching from a distant hill  
Why do you appear to me  
Star of wonder, If you will

In the morning they'll come looking for the  
Sheppard on the hill  
What would make her leave her flock  
For surely, she must love them still.

Star of wonder in the heavens  
Are you just a shining star  
Or should I follow you tonight

Star of wonder  
Star of wonder  
Shining bright

+John

## EVENING PRAYER

We will have evening prayer on Wednesdays at 7:00 on zoom. Fr. Ross McCrory is leading evening prayer in England and you can contact him on email at [rossmccrory1@gmail.com](mailto:rossmccrory1@gmail.com).

## REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Pray for Carolyn Hurley as she mourns the loss of her sister.

Pray for all those facing physical illness. Remember Kris' sister who has stage 4 cancer. Remember Steve and Sandy Sullivan who are still recovering from recent medical events and their daughter, Kathy, who has cancer. Remember also Pidge and all others who are struggling with cancer. Jim Didier's family can also use our continued prayers for their daughter and for Sherri. Pray for Fr. Cliff's wife Lil as she continues to need care. Pray for Bill Hoot and Ginny also.

Pray for Fr. Gary's brother who is recovering but it's been a year and also for a good friend, Jim Hicks who is in need of prayer.

Pray for those affected by ICE raids in their neighborhoods and for all those arrested and imprisoned by ICE. Pray for the surviving family members and friends of those who have been murdered, abused, tortured, and imprisoned unjustly.

Pray for true peace in Gaza, the West Bank and in Ukraine and for protection of their citizens. Pray also for those who work tirelessly in support of those in Palestine and in Ukraine and those displaced and suffering.

Pray for Justice - for without Justice, there can be no peace.

Pray for the caretakers, the nurses and doctors, the ambulance drivers and teams of workers in the hospitals and care centers who are often overworked and stressed by the demands of their jobs.

Pray for all to see that God is love and that we are our sibling's keeper and that acts of violence are acts against God.

Pray for all to have adequate food and

housing, give us all our daily bread.

Pray for the release of hostages and refugees  
to pursue their dreams with their parents,  
families and loved ones.

## READINGS FOR JANUARY

### Epiphany – Jan 6 celebrated Jan 4

Isaiah 60:1-6      Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Ephesians 3:1-12    Matthew 2:1-12

### Baptism of the Lord, Jan 11, 2026

Isaiah 42:1-9      Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34-43      Matthew 3:13-17

### Epiphany 2, Jan 18, 2026

Isaiah 49:1-7      Psalm 40:1-11  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9    John 1:29-42

### Epiphany 3, Jan 25, 2026

Isaiah 9:1-4      Psalm 27:1, 4-9  
1 Corinthians 1:10-18    Matthew 4:12-23

### Epiphany 4, Feb 01, 2026

Micah 6:1-8      Psalm 15  
1 Corinthians 1:18-31    Matthew 5:1-12

## CLERGY SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Jan 4	+John	Epiphany
Jan 11	Cliff+/Gary+	Baptism of the Lord
Jan 18	Charlene+/John Y+	Epiphany 2
Jan 25	+John+/Betty	Epiphany 3
Feb 1	Cliff+	Epiphany 4

## MONASTIC WAY

A copy of Monastic Way by Joan Chittister, OSB should be sent to you on the first. If you don't receive it, let me know and I'll send it to you. Sr. Joan and the Erie Benedictines have made this possible and free to all. You can find more from Sr. Joan at <https://www.joanchittister.org/>



Wise women also came.  
The fire burned  
in their wombs  
long before they saw  
the flaming star  
in the sky.  
They walked in shadows,  
trusting the path  
would open  
under the light of the moon.  
Wise women also came,  
seeking no directions,  
no permission  
from any king.

They came  
by their own authority,  
their own desire,  
their own longing.  
They came in quiet,  
spreading no rumors,  
sparking no fears  
to lead  
to innocents' slaughter,  
to their sister Rachel's  
inconsolable lamentations.



Wise women also came,  
and they brought  
useful gifts:  
water for labor's washing,  
fire for warm illumination,  
a blanket for swaddling.  
Wise women also came,  
at least three of them,  
holding Mary in the labor,  
crying out with her  
in the birth pangs,  
breathing ancient blessings  
into her ear.

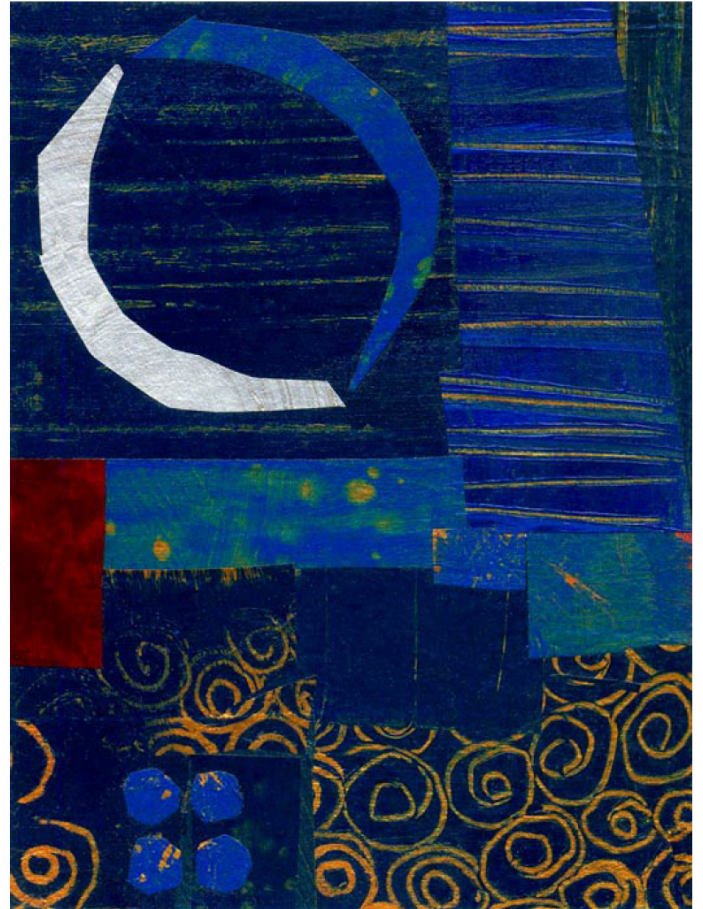
Wise women also came,  
and they went,  
as wise women always do,  
home a different way.

Jan Richardson

## BLESSING

Now  
more than ever  
let us be the ones  
who will not turn away.  
Let us be the ones  
who will go  
farther into the wreck  
and deeper into the rubble.  
Let us be the ones  
who will enter into the places  
of devastation beyond belief  
and despair beyond our imagining.  
And there let us listen  
for the Spirit that brooded  
over the formless darkness,  
and there let us look again  
for the God who gathered up the chaos  
and began to create.

Let us be the ones  
who will give ourselves  
to the work of making again  
and to the endless beginning  
of creation.



*Longest Night*

## BLESSING

That you will be wise  
to each season and time;  
that every hour  
will open its purpose to you;  
that you will know  
the need of the moment  
and give yourself to it  
with abandon  
and with grace.

Text and Painting by Jan Richardson