



Balta Lelija

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## “The Star of Bethlehem” Epiphanie

*Mt 2,1-12*

*After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'At Bethlehem in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.' Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared and sent them on to Bethlehem with the words, 'Go and find out all about the child, and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were given a warning in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.*

Today is the feast of the appearance of the Lord, and it is celebrated that the nations of the Gentiles recognize the Lord. At last the news has reached them, for salvation is destined for all nations. No one is excluded from God's will of salvation and the time of ignorance is over!

But this message is to be prevented from the very beginning. The devil, who makes use of King Herod, uses his blind fear for his power to make him the murderer of the children of Bethlehem. The goal is clear - even if Herod may not have understood it comprehensively: this newborn king, the Messiah, whom the wise men from the Orient seek, should not grow up in order to fulfil his mission...

*"And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not known him." (Jn 1,5)*

How do those for whom the star of Bethlehem has not yet been lighted up come to know the Messiah?

*"You are the light of the world"* said the Lord to his disciples. And continues:

*"A city that lies on a mountain cannot be hidden. Neither do you light a light and put a vessel over it, but put it on the lampstand; then it shines to all in the house. Let your light thus shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."* (Mt 5,14-16)

In another passage it says: *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"* (Jn 9,5).

So the Lord made his disciples to the light of this world, so that they might bear witness to him, the true light. They are - in cooperation with the Holy Spirit - the star of Bethlehem, which should shine everywhere to show people the way to the Messiah. The Church is called to be a city on the mountain and leaven of this world (cf. Mt 13,33).

But her witness is always opposed by the "mighty of this world" who, with cunning and murder, seek to prevent people from paying homage to the new-born King who exercises his dominion so differently from themselves!

This king is so different and his disciples must be like him if they want to remain light. The Church, therefore, must not allow herself to be bought or sell herself if she wants to walk in the light of God: No compromises with the world, no curtailment of the truth, no flirting with ideologies, no adaption to the spirit of the times! How else will the seekers find the light?

When the star of Bethlehem loses its shine, people will follow the irritations of esotericism, of neo-paganism, of a humanism without God. They will think they recognize other religions as paths of salvation, or they will be content with the perishable goods - the soul, however, remains empty! They will not recognize the Son of God!

To be the star of Bethlehem and a light to the seekers. This is a glorious mission. It asks that the light of the Lord increases day by day and that we "decrease", as John the Baptist says (cf. Jn 3,30). And so this light shines more and more unintentionally, it penetrates our being and testifies to him of from whom it is possible to say: *"The true light that enlightens every man came into the world."* (Jn 1,9)