



**A Message for Epiphany from the Right Reverend Thomas J. Brown, Bishop of Maine
January 6, 2022**

In President Obama's memoir, *A Promised Land*, he describes being at Buchenwald, one of the largest of the Nazi's concentration camps, in June of 2009. He was there with German Chancellor Angela Merkle and also with the great Elie Wiesel, Nobel laureate, scholar, and teacher to the world. They were there to acknowledge both the horror that occurred, and also the Camp's liberation in 1945. After the event, Wiesel turned to Obama and Merkle and said, "I thank you two for shining a light here."

Today we join Christians throughout the world to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, or what the Eastern Churches call Theophany, comes from the Greek and means manifestation or appearance. The day is full of narratives and images from scripture...Isaiah's hymnody, and St. Matthew's story of the magi, who were asked to foretell the future, and interpret dreams.

Remember, St. Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience to tell of a Messiah who is both a fulfillment of their faith, and—and this is key—a symbol of God's radical openness to all people. The magi, who are gentiles, become members of the same body, copartners in the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel; we read about this universality in the Letter to the Galatians, about 30 years before St. Matthew was writing.

Today is a grand feast to celebrate God's power to shine light in every place, and through and to every person. St. Matthew reminds Christian disciples like you and me to work continually against drawing lines of division. And to expect that when we do draw those lines, that God's powerful mercy will wash them away.

As we look toward 2022, despite the availability of vaccines, we are affected, still, by what feels like an unending pandemic. Jesus Christ's light is manifest today, and we join him to bear that light so that all might see and be blessed with hope and friendship.



This past year, Wiesel was honored posthumously at the National Cathedral, because his carved bust was dedicated on the cathedral's Human Rights Porch. Mrs. Wiesel was there, and she said, "Like millions of European Jews, Elie suffered unimaginable horrors. But he responded to that suffering by devoting his life to writing, teaching, and above all as a moral leader and tireless advocate for our common humanity."

It is God's great delight to lead us on the pathway of the magi, to give us the power and the will to shine The light. A happy and holy Epiphany to you.