



SMALL GIRL, BIG THOUGHTS

by Isabelle Loiseau

EPIPHANY: WHEN GOD SPEAKS IN A LANGUAGE WE UNDERSTAND

Epiphany is often treated as a gentle conclusion to Christmas — a final visit to the manger, a few exotic gifts, and then we quietly move on. But Epiphany is not an appendix to the Nativity. **It is a revelation.** It is the moment when something hidden becomes visible, when meaning breaks through the ordinary and is suddenly recognized for what it is.

The word itself comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*: an appearing, a manifestation. Epiphany is not about how far the Magi travelled, nor even about the gifts they carried. It is about recognition — about being, and understanding, and responding.

At the heart of the Epiphany story is a striking truth: God does not wait for people to master a sacred language before speaking to them. **God speaks first.** And God speaks fluently.

The Magi were not kings, nor priests, nor members of Israel's religious world. They were scholars — observers of the heavens, trained to read patterns in the sky, to interpret signs, to search for meaning in the movements of the stars. They were not waiting for a Messiah. They were not searching the Scriptures. And yet, they were paying attention.

So God spoke to them in a language they understood. God didn't begin with prophecy or law or temple worship. God began with a star.

An early Church Father who reflected deeply on this passage was Origen of Alexandria, a third-century theologian formed at the crossroads of Scripture, philosophy and classical learning. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Origen pays close attention to the detail of the star, not as a scientific phenomenon, but **an act of divine pedagogy**. "The star did not force the Magi to follow it, but summoned them to seek; it was a sign intelligible to those trained to observe the heavens. [...] The star was not given in such a way as to compel belief, but to invite inquiry."

The light in the sky was meaningful only to those trained to read it. Others may have seen the same star and notice nothing at all. But the Magi recognized it as a sign worth following. Origen says that it was no accident: it revealed something essential about how God acts. God does not despise human disciplines, curiosity, or ways of knowing. God begins precisely there. The star was not a reward for correct belief, nor a shortcut overriding human reason. It required interpretation, attention, and movement. Revelation, in this story, respects both human freedom and human formation.

God met the Magi where they already were — and then led them beyond it.

The star was not the destination. It was the beginning. It drew the Magi into a journey that would eventually require a new language. When they reached Jerusalem, the star was no longer enough. Scripture was needed to name Bethlehem (Book of Micah). The same God who spoke through the heavens now spoke through the story of a people, and finally through the presence of a child. It is not a contradiction of revelation, but a deepening of it. God speaks in layers. God translates divine truth into human frameworks because of His infinite love and compassion for us.

Epiphany reminds us that God is not limited to one vocabulary. God speaks through Scripture and sacrament, but also through study, beauty, grief, curiosity, work, and longing. God speaks in languages we already know. Not to leave us there, but to invite us further in. So don't look far — **God is speaking your language today!** God knows your interests and your skills. He has already equipped you to understand the language He speaks to you, to see the signs He sends you. Hallelujah, and Amen!

THE WORD ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS IS, AND ALWAYS WILL BE.
THE WORD CREATED, IS CREATING, AND WILL CONTINUE TO CREATE.
THE WORD DOES NOT SHOUT OVER OUR HUMANITY — IT SPEAKS THROUGH IT.
THE WORD GUIDES US THROUGH WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW, THEN BEYOND.