

Theme of the Week - Epiphany of the Lord

On Sunday, we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. The word 'epiphany' comes from a Greek word meaning revelation or manifestation and for us, the birth of Christ is our sign that God is with us. In this passage from Matthew's Gospel, we are introduced to the wise men. The wise men are thought to have been astrologers from Persia or also known as Magi (Latin for Persian priest or wise man) and their part in this story can resonate with many of us; the wise men represent all who seek God with a sincere heart. The wise men were not Jews, the faith that Jesus was, yet they were the one who recognised the signs that led to them knowing something special was to happen and as a result they travelled far to worship this new king. Now if we were asked to go and search for a king or queen, we would probably go to Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle or another royal residence in search of this king or queen. The wise men did the same, they went to the palace in Jerusalem in their search however when they were led to a simple house in a small town with no regalia or giant building they found the Divine in the Ordinary. The wise men then presented three gifts, Gold to indicate the royalty of the child; Frankincense to indicate the holiness of the child and Myrrh to indicate the humanity of the Christ Child and after encountering Jesus they left by a new road. Unlike Herod and others who should have known what was happening, they were not open to the revelation of God in this child and sought instead to harm him.

In the Feast of the Epiphany, we celebrate the welcoming of all people who seek God. It is not just the chosen people who are invited to have faith in Jesus as Lord. He is significant to all who seek truth and his light draws people into a relationship with God. On Monday, 7th January, we also celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Here we see John the Baptist preaching '*someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am...*', then when John baptizes Jesus in the river Jordan the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus with a voice from heaven saying 'You are my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests with you'. Jesus is the sign of God's love for creation and through who God's love is made known to all.

This week is a time to reflect on how far we have travelled in our own journey towards Jesus. What is leading you? How much progress have you made? How open are you to finding the divine in the ordinary?

Epiphany of the Lord

Weekly Reflections
7th January 2024



A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (2:1-12)

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. '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. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
for out of 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. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said '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 there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it 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 warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Prayer for the Week

**Lord Jesus, in your birth
the wise men found the
Divine in Ordinary and the
revelation that God is with
us. Allow us to further our
relationship with you by
demonstrating our love for
all.**

In your name we pray.

Amen

**Feast Day - Theodosius The
Cenobiarch - 11th January**



Theodosius were attracted to religion from a young age and was especially drawn to the promise of the Holy Land. He left his parents and friends behind for the love of God and set out for Jerusalem in 451. Theodosius, determined to learn discipline before living in solitude, studied under the hermit Abbot Longinus. Theodosius eventually settled in a mountaintop cave, praying at all times, and roping himself upright to prevent sleep. He fasted constantly and did not taste bread for 30 years. He formed a small community of monks near Bethlehem that tended the sick, elderly and mentally impaired.

Theodosius was:

Attentive and Discerning

Day 1

**Who were the wise men
and where did they come
from?**

**What gifts did they bring
to Jesus?**

**What were they looking
for and what did they
find?**

Day 2

**How were the wise men
drawn to the Christ Child?**

**How does the birth of
Jesus allow us to have a
relationship with God?**

**What signs does Jesus
teach us in order to
further our relationship
with God?**

Day 3

**Reflect on your relationship with Jesus. What have you done
that demonstrates the love Jesus has for us?**

**What can you do this week that will allow you to further enrich
your relationship with Jesus?**