

The feast of the Epiphany of the Lord | Wednesday 6 January 2021

Today is Wednesday the 6 January, the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord.

One Hope Project sings a version of 'See Amid the Winter's Snow'. As we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, take a moment to reflect on your Advent and Christmas journey of these last few weeks.

Today we hear a very well known reading on this feast of the Epiphany from the Gospel of Matthew...do you notice anything new in it?

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men[a] from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they

saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

There is so much symbolic meaning in this story . . . tropes of heroic quest, the challenge of evil scheming, the joy of finding the object of the search, threats – for now – averted. And then there are the three gifts

Gold: for a king . . . what kind of leader is Jesus going to be?

Frankincense: used in the worship of God . . . which quality of the divine do you most enjoy in Jesus? . . . tell him what you like about it . . .

Myrrh: to anoint the dead . . . three decades later Mary Magdalene will take myrrh to anoint the body of Jesus . . . she won't get to use it . . . in the years after his resurrection, what might it be like for her to smell myrrh?

As you listen again, what metaphorical meaning are you noticing?

If you could give one gift to this family, what would it be? . . . in prayer, make your offering . . .

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.