

on several ancient observations and texts, discussing what the star of Bethlehem might have been- a conjunction of planets or a comet for example.) In the poem *The Journey of the Magi* by T S Eliot, the poet sees the wise men regretting their long journey “a hard time we had of it”; And struggling to let go of an old way of life or way of seeing things “We returned to our places, these Kingdoms, But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation...”, So what can we learn from this feast? We can reflect on what ‘star’ we follow in our lives. What guides us? Ambition, vanity, wealth? Do we also struggle to let go of old well-worn ideas or ways of seeing things? The magi were wise because their star led them to Jesus. **-Sue Wilson**

Entrance Antiphon: Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

First Reading: Isaiah 60: 1-6

Responsorial Psalm: 71 Response: All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! We saw his star as it rose and have come to do the Lord homage. Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Memorial Acclamation: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: We have seen his star in the East, and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

What are you doing, O Magi? Do you adore a little Babe, in a wretched hovel, wrapped in miserable rags? Can this Child be truly God? ... Are you become foolish, O Wise Men ... Yes, these Wise Men have become fools that they may be wise.— Saint Bernard of Clairvaux



The Epiphany of the Lord, Cycle B, 2023 Weekly Reflection: The Epiphany:

Have you ever considered that the gifts brought by the wise men of gold, frankincense and myrrh were rather impractical for a new born?

The old joke is that had they been wise women, they would have asked directions of a local (other than King Herod!) and arrived with blankets, a casserole and nappies! But of course the story has a deeper meaning. The gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh are all symbols, which point us to an understanding of who this special child is. The gold is a symbol of kingship; frankincense was used in Temple worship, its smoke rising to represent prayers rising to God. Therefore, it tells us that this child is to be worshipped. And myrrh was embalming fluid- a macabre foreshadowing of what lay ahead. The child may be a king and the Son of God, but he would suffer.

The gospel of Matthew tells us that these men are from the east “Some men who studied the stars came from the east...” Matthew 2:1-2. We do not know where precisely that may be. It is left vague and mysterious. But they are clearly not Jewish, as most of Matthew’s original audience would have been. Although Matthew is continually stressing in his gospel how Jesus fulfils the Old Testament prophecies, this story asserts that Jesus is for the whole world. This is his manifestation or epiphany to the world- hence the title of the feast. In some renaissance paintings the wise men are shown as a European, an African and an Asian (the only known continents at the time) for example the adoration of the magi by Jan Gossaert. (National Gallery London)

“We saw his star when it came up in the East, and we have come to worship him” What about the star? Again in practical terms not as reliable as a map or even sat nav! But for ancient people, events in the skies mirrored momentous events on earth. The birth of this child has cosmic consequences. (Jodrell Bank used to do a marvellous presentation based