

## EPIPHANY

EPIPHANY. Not a word that we use very often.

The oxford dictionary defines it as a manifestation. This word has several applications but the most appropriate is revelation. Again a word with several meanings but the one that fits today's scripture is: - something or someone made apparent by God.

Epiphany in today's context means that we remember and celebrate Jesus revelation to all as Son of God. His first manifestation to the world has been through the Magi.

There were many subsequent manifestations, for example  
. In the temple in Jerusalem Jesus revealed himself as the promised Messiah.

.At Jesus baptism in the river Jordan, God revealed Jesus as his son.

. At the transfiguration God again revealed Jesus as his Son.

These multiple revelations are all suggested by today's feast.

The feast of the Epiphany is an older feast than Christmas and in some countries presents are exchanged on this day, rather than at Christmas, recalling the gifts presented by the Magi.

This fest is important because, through the Magi, we see the first manifestation of Jesus to the gentiles (the non Jewish people)

Rightly or wrongly we often associate Isaiah's prophecies with Jesus- they do fit very well- and today is no exception. There are several important aspects of today's offering from Isaiah.

It mentions non-Jewish people bringing gifts and singing the praise of God.

It also celebrates the divine light emanating from Jerusalem and foresees all nations acknowledging the light, enjoying it and walking by it.

The psalm today (psalm 72) expresses the hope that all kings on earth might pay homage to, and serve the God of Israel and his messiah.

St Paul affirms that, through Jesus, membership in God's people has been extended to and made available to all peoples. In other words it is through Jesus that the Jews and the Gentiles have become co-heirs:- members of the same body and co-partners in the promise.

Today's gospel teaches us how Christ enriches those who bring him their hearts. Just as the Magi came with Joy in their hearts to visit Jesus, we are also invited to do the same.

The Magi were led to Jesus by a star. The Jewish Rabbis commenting on the Torah suggested that a star appeared in the sky at the births of Abraham, Isaac and Moses.

Likewise in the Book of Numbers the prophet Balaam speaks of a "star that shall come out of Jacob" Stars were believed to be signs from God, announcing important

events. Thus the brightness that led the Kings to Jesus became the star in Matthews's gospel today.

The gifts presented to Jesus have significance:-

Gold represented Kingship.

Frankincense a temple offering.

Myrrh an ointment used to prepare the dead for burial.

All these gifts point to Jesus life as King and savior and eventually his death and resurrection.

The Epiphany can be looked upon as a symbol for our pilgrimage through life.

The feast invites us to see ourselves as images of the Magi, a people on a journey to Christ.

There were three reactions to the birth of Jesus

1 Herod and his group intended to kill Jesus

2 The Scribes & priests combined to ignore Jesus

3 The third group the Magi & shepherds adore Jesus and offer themselves to him.

So the challenge for us is that by welcoming and following the star that leads to Jesus, we can help to remove the darkness of evil around us, by being like burning candles radiating Gods love in selfless service, unconditional forgiveness and compassionate care.

Let us bring our gifts to Jesus in our Eucharist today

The gift of friendship with God

The gift of friendship with others.

The gift of reconciliation, repairing damaged relationships in and outside our families.

The gift of peace, peace with God, that comes about through prayer, meditation and sacramental life