



## Reflections & Prayers for the Epiphany

3 January 2021



As we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, let us, like the wise men, pay homage to the King of Kings and offer the best of who we are as gifts to him. May we travel through life resisting the shadows of today's Herods (and the darkness within ourselves), seeking instead the paths of starlight and wonder.

## Contents

Readings for this Sunday	p. 2-3
Reflection	p. 3
Prayers	p. 4-5
Parish Prayers	p. 5-6

## Readings for this Sunday

These are the readings for this Sunday which you may like to read in your bibles at home.

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Ephesians 3: 1-12

**Matthew 2: 1-12**

### **The Visit of the Wise Men**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men 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.

## Reflection for the Epiphany of the Lord from Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

In the Book of Genesis, we hear these dramatic words from God, 'Let there be light.' (1.3). In John's gospel, Jesus describes himself with these equally profound words, 'I am the light of the world.' (8.12). At the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord we celebrate the great festival of light. As the church, we remember and celebrate that Jesus, who was born in the darkness of night in an animal shed, is the light of and for the world. The word 'epiphany' means to make known or to reveal. The angels made known and revealed to the shepherds the joy of the birth of Jesus. In the same way, the star led these strangers from the East and revealed the same Jesus to them.

Traditionally, we believe that the shepherds did not stay at the stable after seeing Jesus, Mary and Joseph; they left glorifying and praising God. They left filled with the good news of this wondrous child. Just as the angels had proclaimed the good news to them, the shepherds in their turn shared their good news with others. In the same way, the visitors from the east, after they had given Jesus their gifts, also left the stable. They didn't stay there either. We are only told that they did not go back to Herod but went home another way. We can only assume, that they too told everyone what they had seen and heard in that small stable in Bethlehem.

As we look upon the crib, we cannot stay there. Like the shepherds and the magi, we too are called to move away and take the light of Jesus with us. We are asked not only to admire the light, but to be people of light. As Jesus himself tells us, 'you are the light of the world and your light must shine.' The light of the Epiphany is given to us as a gift, but we cannot keep it to or for ourselves. Through the quality of our daily lives and how we treat each other, we are called to make our families, homes, communities and the wider world a better and brighter place for all people, especially the poor and the marginalised.

So may Christ the Light and the Light of Christ fill all our homes, families and our communities this day and always.

## Prayers

Let us worship the Saviour with joy  
and make our prayer to our heavenly Father.  
The magi came from the east to worship your Son:  
Father, grant to Christians everywhere  
the spirit of adoration  
Lord of glory, hear our prayer.

The infant Christ received gifts of gold, incense and myrrh:  
Father, accept the offering of our hearts and minds  
at the beginning of this new year  
Lord of glory, hear our prayer.

The kingdoms of this world have become  
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ:  
Father, grant an abundance of peace to your world ...  
Lord of glory, hear our prayer.

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death:  
Father, look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless,  
and all who suffer ...  
Lord of glory, hear our prayer.

Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth:  
Father, protect in your love our neighbours,  
our families and this community of which we are a part ...  
Lord of glory, hear our prayer.

Father, we rejoice in our fellowship  
with the shepherds, the angels, the magi,  
the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph  
and all the faithful departed.  
In your unfailing love for us and for all people,  
hear and answer our prayers through your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.        Amen.

As our saviour taught us, so we pray  
Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen

### Parish Prayers for the week ahead

#### **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria
Monday	The Diocese of Abakaliki – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Tuesday	The Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney – The Scottish Episcopal Church
Wednesday	The Diocese of Abuja – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Thursday	The Diocese of Abyei – The Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan
Friday	The Diocese of Accra – The Church of the Province of West Africa
Saturday	The Diocese of Adelaide – The Anglican Church of Australia

#### **In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Bishop of Hertford
Monday	Parish of Ampthill (Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford)
Tuesday	Parish of Arlesey (Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford)
Wednesday	Parish of Aspley Guise (Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford)
Thursday	Parish of Astwick (Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford)

Friday Parish of Barton-le-Cley (Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford)  
Saturday Parish of Battlesden with Pottesgrove (Deanery of Ampthill and Shefford)

**For the homes and families in:**

Sunday Aran Close, Ashcroft Close  
Monday Barlings Road, Barnfield Road  
Tuesday Barrons Row, Beech Close  
Wednesday Beeson End Lane, Bewdley Close  
Thursday Birch Way, Bowling Close  
Friday Broadstone Road, Burnsall Place  
Saturday Burywick, Camberley Place

**The Sick:**

Berkeley, Amy Smart, Claire, Jo, Sue, Christine Strohm, Hermione, Karen, Sue Holt, Enid Giles, Jo Young, Chris, Sophie Crowley and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

**For the recently deceased:**

Charles Troward, Grace Goate, Audrey Thurtell

**On their year's mind:**

Desmond King, Frances Wathen, Peter Van Dijk, Blanche Watts, Frank Millard, James Johnson, Pamela Murray, Karen Rollings, Beryl Cooper.

[A reminder... of this phone service:](#)

**Daily Hope** – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

**Church at home**

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie.