

Weekly Theme

W/C 9th January 2017



“Good News”

Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the new born king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search for the child..." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising went before them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They knelt before him and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

This week we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany of Jesus, when we remember the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus.

God's presence is revealed to us in many different ways. We can search out the meaning of our dreams; we can learn from our own and others' experience; and we can be guided by the words that we read in the scriptures. We can have a deep awareness of our place on the earth which teaches us respect for all creation and respect for its power which can lead each one of us beyond ourselves.

The feast of the Epiphany tells us about the wise ones or astrologers 'from the East' who are led beyond themselves and their immediate location by the rising of a star. They form their own views about what the star meant and travel west to search out the meaning of this sign.

When they ask questions in Jerusalem about a new-born "king of the Jews" they attract the attention of Herod, the Roman-appointed "king of the Jews". They continue their journey following the star that leads them to the home of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem, where they find the new born baby, the Wisdom of God.

The gospel does not tell us how many wise ones or magi come to pay homage to the child. There is no indication in the story as to whether they are men or women or both. The three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh have been traditionally associated with three different characters, usually kings of

different nationalities and colour. These strangers are the first to recognise 'God-with-us' in the baby Jesus. They also come to recognise 'in a dream' Herod's threat to kill the baby, and so they return home by a different way.

Today each one of us is given an invitation to be the wise ones of our generation, to join with people of different cultures, to make our own search for wisdom, and to follow the star that leads to truth and lasting peace. But we also have to be on the lookout for those who find themselves, and the power they have threatened by the Good News that the birth of Jesus brings into our world.

**O God, as you guided the Magi by the light of a star,
May Jesus be our light.**

**O God, you have created a marvellous variety of peoples,
May we be open to all cultures, races, and nations.**

**O God, your love surrounds us,
May we faithfully offer Christ the gold of living faith,
the incense of our worship, and the myrrh of compassion.**

Amen

Form Tutor

The aim of this week's theme:

God wants each person that he has created to be treated with respect, fairness and equality. But sometimes we judge people differently because of their creed or the colour of their skin.

How can we show the values of Jesus and be the "Good News" in our world today?

Day1

Tutor

Read the Scripture

Student Prayer

Loving Father, help us to be wise and to know the right things to do to follow you. Amen

St John Plessington
Pray for us

Day 2

Think about: The society in which we live.

Tutor:

Each of the Wise men came from a different culture. They brought different gifts to the baby Jesus. Today we want to think about the importance of understanding the values and beliefs of those from a different culture. What could we do to understand others better?

Student prayer

Dear Lord, help me to respect all people regardless of their colour, creed or gender.

Amen

St John Plessington

Pray for us

Day 3

Think about: The world in which we live.

Tutor

Today we want to think about the places in our world where war or fighting is taking place over people's different beliefs and values. Can your students name any places and the reasons why this is happening?

Student Prayer

Loving Father, today make me a channel of your peace.

Amen

St John Plessington

Pray for us

Day Four

Think about our college community

Tutor

Today think about how many students we have in our college family who have come here from different countries. What must it be like to live in a country and a society that is different from where you have grown up?

Student Prayer

Today Father, help me to see all people as you do.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

Day Five

Think about our families

Tutor

Sometimes our families change and we have to accept new people into being a part of our family. Sometimes we can find this a hard thing to do. What can we do to help everyone in this situation?

Student Prayer

Lord, help me never to give up, even when the going gets hard

Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

Other prayers you may wish to use

Lord, we continue to celebrate your birth
in these days of the Christmas season.
As the Wise Men came to you from the East,
bringing their gifts,
inspire us to offer you our own gifts too.
As our New Year begins,
help us to be generous,
with our time, talents and energy.
Help us to use them wisely
to praise you and to serve one another.
Amen.

Loving God, journey with me this year
so that I may feel your presence,
abide in your forgiveness, grow in your strength,
and dwell in your love.
Give me an open heart,
an open mind,
and open eyes
so that I may sing your praise
and follow your path always and everywhere.
Amen.

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;
Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;
Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;
Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,
and by making you anxious to be there to help.
God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

Dear Lord, please give me...

A few friends who understand me and remain my friends;
A work to do which has real value,
without which the world would be the poorer;
A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed;
An understanding heart;
A sense of humour;
Time for quiet, silent meditation;
A feeling of the presence of God;
The patience to wait for the coming of these things,
With the wisdom to recognise them when they come.
Amen.

