

'CALLED OUT INTO LIFE' - EPIPHANY - HOMILY – 8 JANUARY 2017

[CALLED BEYOND THE SAFE HARBOUR - CALLED BEYOND THE PRACTICE NETS](#)

We began the New Year last Sunday.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN THIS YEAR?

WHAT CARRIES US OVER FROM LAST YEAR?

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL WE HAVE?

We reflect on what we learn from God through our neighbours in the street, and at work,
And at school, and at leisure,
And from our Indigenous sisters and brothers,
And from the villages in South Sudan, we support,
And from Blackall/Tambo Parish in central Queensland.
And locally, what we learn from God through our newest parish family members,
Whether from other parts of Australia, migrants from overseas, refugees from Iraq and Syria,
visitors on vacation, or our new babies born in Brisbane.

Let us turn to Matthew's Gospel.

The [BEGINNING](#) helps us understand [THE WAY FORWARD](#).

The response of the world to the birth of Jesus in the story of the Magi is in Chapter 2.

It gives us a background to the last words of Jesus in Chapter 28,

Where we, as a community of disciples, are called to go forward.

In the last words of Matthew's Gospel 28:18b – 20, the Risen Christ says,

***"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
Baptising them in the name of the Father
And of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
And teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."***

Though this seems the starting place for us, the whole Gospel has been told beforehand,
[SHEDDING LIGHT](#) on this [COMMISSION](#).

The birth of Jesus, his adult baptism,

His ministry in Galilee and his ministry in Jerusalem,

His gift of the Eucharist, his passion, death, resurrection and post-resurrection appearances

[ALL SHED LIGHT ON THIS COMMISSION](#)

His teaching, his miracles, his encounters, [ALL SHED LIGHT ON THIS COMMISSION](#).

This Sunday we celebrate the Epiphany - the coming of the Magi to the Christmas Manger – in Matthew 2:1-12, and this story sheds light on the Commission of Jesus in 28:18b-20.

- **HOW DO WE MOVE FROM OUR OWN CONCERNS, FEARS, LOVE, INTERESTS, AND HOBBIES TO A UNIVERSAL LOVE FOR GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR?**
- **HOW DO WE TURN FROM OUR OWN SELF-INTEREST -**
 - **TO A LOVE WHERE ALL ARE OUR FAMILY?**
 - **TO GOD WHO SURPRISES AND CALLS US BEYOND OURSELVES?**
 - **TO GOD WHO CALLS US OUT OF THE SAFE HARBOUR, TO SAIL THE OCEAN OF LIFE?**
 - **TO GOD WHO CALLS US OUT OF THE PRACTICE NETS TO PLAY ON THE COURT OF LIFE, THE FIELD OF LIFE?**

Let us go back to the Epiphany and pick up the instructions.
In Matthew's Gospel, the Magi, the Wise Ones, are nameless.
Only later in time are they called 'The Three Kings', as people reflected back into the Old Testament on Psalm 72:10 and in Isaiah 49:7 and 60:10.
Only later again in time are they given the names of *Caspar, Balthasar* and *Melchior*.

Matthew presents the Epiphany, Jesus to the world.
The Magi, the wise ones come from the east, following the star to Jerusalem, where they enquire,

"Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?" Matthew 2:2

They wish to worship him.

Herod is troubled. We could say that he feels threatened by this news.

Herod checks out "where the Christ was to be born".

He is told by his advisers that Bethlehem is the place where,

"for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel". Matthew 2:6

The Magi find the child with Mary his mother.

They worship him and offer gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

They return home.

Herod sets out to kill Jesus by killing every child two years and under.

God instructs Joseph in a dream to take the family and flee to Egypt.

The scene already points to the **AUTHORITY** of Jesus.

The Magi call him King (and thereby the notion of **KINGDOM**).

Even Herod calls him **THE CHRIST** (the Messiah, the anointed one).

Recognised by wise ones of the East - taking the '**GOOD NEWS**' - to the Gentiles, to the world.

The star points to Jesus. **TRUE WISDOM LEADS TO JESUS**.

Light - showing **THE WAY** to Jesus.

The **ministry** of the Christ - which the power of the day will try to suppress.

The physical danger to Jesus and others.

The acceptance of Jesus in another nation – Egypt - as a **refugee**.

As we look to the Commission by Jesus in Mt. 28, sometimes called 'The Great Commission',

The Epiphany has already pointed to the authority of Jesus universally,

The mission of the disciples of Jesus to go to the nations.

Following Jesus is **MISSION**.

Whereas the Magi brought gifts that they thought were appropriate, and then they left Jesus, Jesus offers the wonderful present to us as disciples when he says,

"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Jesus offers us his saving presence always - in a loving relationship with us.

We are no longer loners. We are no longer tribal.

Our religion is not private, but goes out to the world. Our faith is mission.

The Magi brought what they thought was appropriate. They did it sincerely.

The gifts are respected and are named. Their culture is respected.

As Christians, we ask Jesus what He wishes. We ask in prayer.

The Magi left Jesus.
Jesus does not leave us.

The Magi did not offer to accompany Jesus later as a refugee.
This past year we have learnt from our new families about being a refugee.
Jesus is with us wherever we go as disciples,

The Epiphany sheds light on the Commission of Jesus.
The Gospel reveals how we are to live our baptised lives in Jesus.

Last Sunday at 9am Mass, **Tutana**, an adult member of our community was baptised, confirmed and received Jesus in his First Communion.

With a work transfer in a few days, and having been part of our parish catechumenate group, Tutana committed himself to being a disciple of Jesus and to the promise of Jesus:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

At the same Mass, Steve and Gabrielle presented their infant son **Noah** for baptism.
They promised to raise him in the love and presence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus offers us the gift of His presence always.

Not gold, frankincense and myrrh, but his saving presence always.

Jesus Christ promises his presence in our lives. Jesus promises to love us.

**In our ‘PARISH YEAR OF PRAYER – 2017’, we will respond to God who loves us.
God will show us. Sometimes God will surprise us.**

In this Year A of the Church’s Sunday Reading Cycle, **the Gospel of Matthew will speak to us.**

**May we live the Commission that Jesus gave us in Matthew 28,
Not just in harbour or in the practice nets,
But on the ocean,
And in the field of life.**

We pray that we **grow deeper in our love of God and neighbour.**

In the presence of God, let us now pray our parish mission prayer.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Called Out Into Life – 8 January 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/010817.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook08012017>]