

'SEEKING A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE IN JESUS'

Epiphany - 6th January 2019

SLOWING DOWN

Yesterday in one of our local shops, Hot Cross Buns were on sale.
The Christmas Season hasn't finished,
yet the commercial intent to make money out of Easter has already begun.

Let us slow down and appreciate Christmas and its message.
Today is the celebration of the **EPIPHANY**, the 12th Day of Christmas.

We add the figures of the wise ones from the East,
the Magi to the Christmas crib.

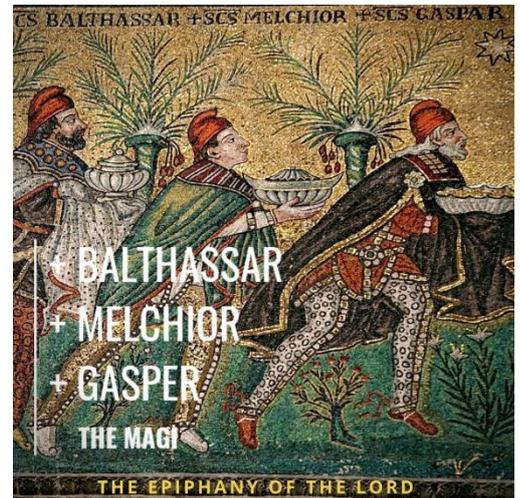
THE MAGI

We hear from Matthew's Gospel 2:1-12 about the Magi from the East.
Sometimes in the Christmas Crib, they are shown as Kings.
But the Gospel calls them Magi.

The Magi are known as wise people from Eastern traditions.

They come **searching for the truth**, following a star.
They know that the child they **seek** is the king of the Jews.
They come not only to meet and greet, or just to pay their respects.

They come to **give homage** to the child.
The Greek word is for **worship** in English.
They **worship Jesus**.



THE MAGI – SYMBOL OF PEACE

The term Magi has several meanings.
One such meaning is that they were from the eastern part of the Middle East,
during an era of conflict between two Empires - the Romans and the Parthians.
Several decades before the birth of Jesus,
there had been a Parthian invasion which the Roman Empire repelled.

There is a strong symbol in the journeying of the Magi
from the Parthian region, to Jesus in Bethlehem, to give worship.

The symbol of the Magi challenges the mentality
of war and destruction in general,
and between east and west in particular.

There is the opportunity for **peace**
if we really desire it and work with God for it.

HEROD

However, there are temptations to conquer and control others, out of fear and insecurity within us.

Herod doesn't want to let go.

He sees the birth of Jesus as a threat to his power.

Hence the contrast between the Magi and Herod.

Though we see the Christmas scene as one of peace, Matthew's Gospel points out the dangers faced by Jesus from the very beginning. Particularly the wrath, jealousy and cruelty of Herod who seeks to kill Jesus.

As we encounter the peace that Jesus gives us in life, we challenge the threats, wrath, jealousy, fear, cruelty within ourselves and in our world.

The Gospel relates:

*"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.'"*

Herod was frightened.

In this New Year, we face our fears and insecurities, because **we want a better quality of life.**

Herod was violent and abusive and manipulative
In this New Year, we face any violent and abusive behavior, and any desperate clinging to power, prestige and wealth, because **we want a better quality of life.**

WE TURN TO JESUS

In this New Year we ask God in prayer to show the path to peace.

In this New Year, we turn to **Jesus who offers us a better quality of life – a way of life where we are loved by God and where we deeply love God and love our neighbour.**

SHEPHERD

Jewish priests and scribes quote a prophecy to Herod, pointing to Bethlehem as the place.

*"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.” ’

Not only a ruler, but also one who shepherds his people.
We share in the faith community, the **call and mission to shepherd.**

GIFTS TO JESUS

The Gospel continues:

The Magi response to finding Jesus, says:

*“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.”*

MAY WE BRING OUR GIFTS TO JESUS IN 2019

As the Magi brought gifts to Jesus,
may we bring as **our gifts to Jesus in 2019,**

- a desire to be **aware of God’s deep love for us,**
- and a desire to **love God deeply in return,**
- and a desire to **love our neighbour and to care for the earth, our common home**

May we share the experience of the Magi
in being **overwhelmed with joy in the presence of Jesus.**

May we reflect on, and pray about, and seek out
the call of the church community to **share in the mission
of Jesus as shepherd in 2019.**

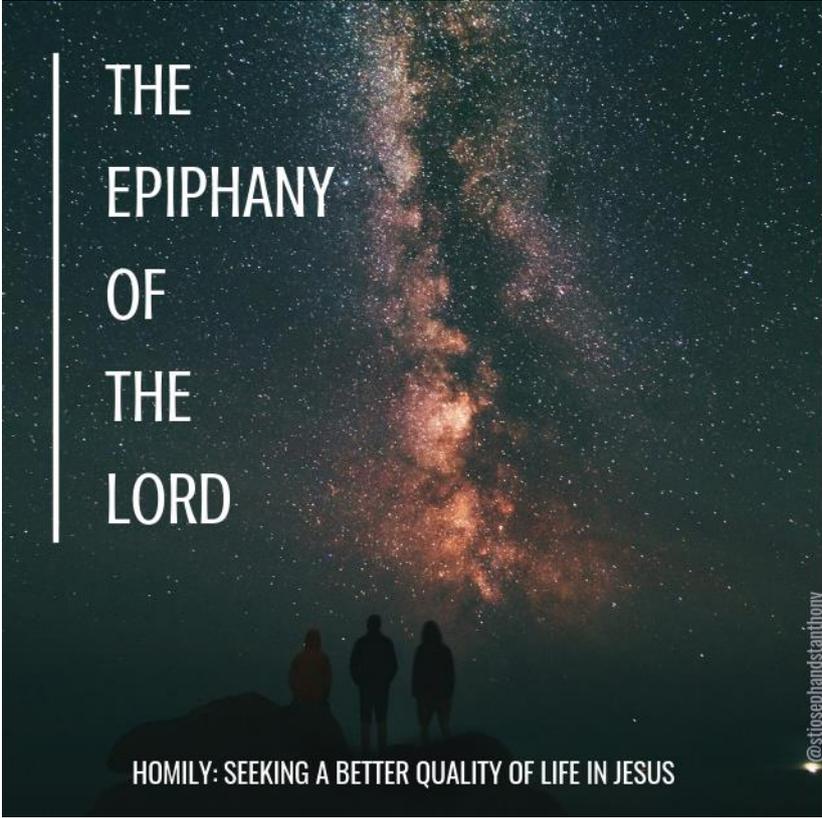
Let us pause as three parish members now take the three Magi,
from under the Table of God’s Word
and place them in our Christmas Crib.

Let us pray joyfully

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/010619.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook06012019>]



THE
EPIPHANY
OF
THE
LORD

HOMILY: SEEKING A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE IN JESUS

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