

Homily. Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. 5/6 January 2019.

The birth of Jesus is the heart of Christmas and this Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord tells us what this heart, this birth and coming amongst us as one of us, means for us all. What's more, there aren't any choices about the readings for this weekend because the readings of the Epiphany we've just listened to tell us best what Christmas means.

A light, a dawning brightness has come to us, growing ever stronger and clearer. This coming of the light is for all people, not just one race, culture, nation or way of life. Lastly, this light can never be dimmed or overcome by any darkness, for it is personal and eternal; it's the coming of the Eternal as a person, as one of us.

The journey of the wise men from the pagan lands of the East is the pattern for our own journey, reading God's signs and following the guiding star across the black desert wastes until we are led to the Light Himself. Their homage and worship prefigures ours, since we honour the Lord and worship the One True God. The gifts they gave are bettered by ours because we offer not things but ourselves in and through Christ to God, and in return we receive the Light Himself, living and shining within us.

Don't be fooled, there are 'Herods' about now as there were in ancient times, people vested only in their own power and glory and ambition, aiming to trap and trick us, always pulling and pushing as off course. They're fake stars and false lights, appealing at first for the inducements they seem to be offering, but giving nothing real and lasting in return for

our allegiance. If we focus on them we easily lose sight the guiding star of God's Spirit, ending up waylaid, trapped in the Jerusalem of darkness death rather than the Bethlehem of light and Life to which we are called.

This is what Christmas means and Epiphany reveals; our journey of faith through life, and across the world wherever we go. A journey through a dark desert, reading God's signs and following the Spirit's Star until it brings us to the crib, to Bethlehem, to the Holy Family and to Christ the Lord Himself. This journey into the Dawning Light of God is open to anyone who seeks, asks and knocks, for the infant King of the Jews is, as St. Paul says, now the Lord of all peoples, history and time itself.

And what better gift can we offer Him but ourselves, our devotion and faith in His leadership? Nothing, for there's nothing better than ourselves and His light shared by us with others, not even gold, frankincense or myrrh.

That's the revealing, the showing forth in the Epiphany of the light and meaning of Christmas given to all, celebrated here tonight/today. Stick together this year as we travel to Bethlehem and beyond and we will see the Light, having plenty of His warmth and love to share along the way.