

Homily. Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. 4/5 January 2025.

Things are very different now. We do much of our investigating, planning, chatting and buying via our screens; our phones, tablets, computers and TV's. This is a very recent development, not the way that things were for most of human history. The journey of the Magi, the wise men's from the East takes us back to how things worked until screens took us over.

Their screen, if you will, was sighting a new star in the sky. They saw this event as heralding the appearance and birth of a new King whose destiny was to reign in wisdom and service over all. To find and adore him they had to mount camels and follow the tracks of commerce across the desert lands. These were the ways of business and trading joining up people and their products across space, bridging cultures and ways of life.

The Magi had their wares with them but they weren't for selling. They weren't travelling in order to transact business. In those ancient times they'd taken on the demands and risks of travel so as to give their expensive, lavish gifts away. Their aim wasn't to make a profit but to give their wealth away in devotion to a child they believed in faith was a gift from God to all people of good will.

This is the journey of grace, the language of gift, very different to that of commerce and consumerism. It's the language God speaks, a universal language that the Magi truly were wise enough to understand. It's the language of love, service and unselfishness that focuses on enriching and comforting others, not on making ourselves richer and more comfortable. We can find ourselves caught between these journeys with their two dialects; To buy and sell making ourselves more comfortable or to serve

and give making others richer. The Wise travellers chose the language and way of God, finding Mary, Joseph and the child, a safe harbour of peace and light in a world filled with fear, threats and darkness.

This is our journey of faith, one taken by everyone who has gone before us that's led us to be here today. It's the way the world must take and the language the world must come to understand if Herod and his ilk, ever active among us, are to be avoided and if the light is to overcome the night as it must. Wherever we look, be it to our screens or to the sky's, look longer, harder and deeper. Look beyond what appears to see and hear what things and people really mean. This is how we'll come to see and understand our own guiding stars, the ones that lead to faith, to peace and to Christ, the saviour of all people and of the world itself.