

Reflection for Epiphany

All three of our readings this week point to the revelation of God's grace in sending his Son Jesus Christ to not just one nation or race but to the whole world. Isaiah speaks of the light to which nations will come; Paul of how the Gentiles, excluded in previous generations, are now fellow heirs and sharers in the promise of Christ through the gospel and Matthew tells the story of the wisemen who followed a strange natural phenomenon, the Star to find the King they expected, the ruler foretold by the prophets. The great news is that Jesus is the light that comes to the whole world. None were excluded from God's great gift. God showed his love for the world. As Christina Rossetti's poem says,

'Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign'

Phil Baker



Codes for the Zoom worship at 10.30

These are codes for Sundays from 6 December to the end of January:

Meeting ID: 894 0983 2572

Passcode: 061920

Telephone numbers: 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 10.01.2021 Baptism of Christ

SERVICES 10.30 by Zoom, 12 noon in Church



READINGS

OT Genesis 1: 1-5

NT Acts 10: 1-7

Gospel Mark 1: 4-11

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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 3rd January 2021

Epiphany

10.30 by Zoom (phone-in available)

12 noon Mass in Church

No **procession of the Kings** this morning I'm afraid, but I wonder if you have moved them closer to your cribs over the last few days. An alternative is to mark your doorposts with their initials and the year:
20 + C + M + B + 21 [Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar]

We celebrate this month two great early theologians and bishops of the Church **Saint Basil the Great** and his friend **Saint Gregory Nazianzen**, who died 379 and c389 respectively. Both were bishops and both sought to defend the divinity of Christ. Here is a Collect for their feast day on 2 January:

Lord God,

who servants Basil and Gregory proclaimed the mystery of your Word made flesh,

to build up your Church in wisdom and strength:

grant that we may rejoice in his presence among us, and so be brought with them

to know the power of your unending love;

through Jesus Christ or Son our Lord ... Amen

Fr David



Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Ephesians 3: 1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I

have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "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." ' 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.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Post Communion

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

Community Larder The Community Larder will be collecting on **Tuesdays only** from 10am-12noon, and is allowed to continue operating during the period of lockdown. The collecting point will now be in the Church tower. Please continue to be generous.

Knit and Natter 24th November 2020 We shall continue with Zoom meetings on Thursday mornings. 11.15-11.55am, for the time being, thanks to Vanessa for setting this up. As always, we shall move with the times when we know more clearly what we can safely do together. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the sudden death of Fr Nick Macneill on the 27th December from a heart attack at the age of 58. Fr Nick was first of all curate at St Thomas in the 1990s and then became Team Vicar at St Andrew's for 2 years. Subsequently he became severely disabled by a back operation that went wrong and retired early in 2007. RIP

