

Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

nowraparish.org.au

Epiphany of the Lord

4 January 2009

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

by Dianne Bergant CSA

The Christmas season reaches an apex with the Epiphany. In some liturgical traditions, it is the central celebration of Christmas. It commemorates not only the birth of Christ and the visit of the Magi, but also his baptism in the Jordan and the manifestation of his glory at the wedding feast of Cana. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the focus is on the visit of the Magi and the implications of that visit for the glorious manifestation of God to all the peoples of the world.

There is a wonderful summons to alertness and presence of mind and heart, a call for all the nations to witness the marvellous works of God that shine as light in the midst of the surrounding darkness. The light of God is known in the ways in which

the most vulnerable in the city are cared for and acknowledged. In just action and righteousness, the city becomes the beacon of God, and all the nations are attracted by this light. The quality of the light leads the way through the darkness and sustains the world in goodness and peace.

The manifestation of God among us changes the ways in which we perceive each other. Christ's birth provides us with the light by which we see a new criterion for relating. The Magi represent the multi-ethnic and cultural diversity in civic and parish situations, as well as the many religions of the world. All people, regardless of race or ethnic origin, can be co-heirs with Christ.

Gospel background

The gospel of Mark, the first of the four canonical gospels to be written, does not bother at all with the question of the birth of Jesus. Written some ten or more years later, the gospels of Luke and Matthew both present a version of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus. The gospel of John, written later still, also avoids details of Jesus' birth. The two accounts of the infancy that we do have from the gospels tell very different stories because they have each been used to place the rest of the gospel in a particular context. Unfortunately, the two stories have been mashed together so much that we now have one notion of the Christmas story that is a poor amalgam of the two unique narratives.

In the gospel of Luke, Joseph and Mary are living in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem and are forced to give birth out in a field because there is no room at the only inn in Bethlehem. The ones who bear witness to the birth in this account are shepherds – some of the lowest of the low – as the gospel of Luke identifies Jesus as having a preferential option for the lowly ones. In the gospel of Matthew, Joseph and Mary are living in Bethlehem and give birth in their own house. They later flee to Egypt and then settle in Nazareth. The two towns need to be included in both accounts because they are named in some of the ancient prophecies about the Messiah. In the gospel of Matthew, the witnesses to the birth are wise men, dignitaries from another land. The Matthew writer wants to emphasise the 'kingship' of Jesus and it is fitting that foreign dignitaries present gifts on the birth of a king.

The two stories deserve to be dealt with uniquely and should be unravelled from the muddled, entwined version that dominates our Christmas imagery.



First Reading

60.1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is

rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round: all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and your daughters being tenderly carried. At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you; the wealth of the nations come to you; camels in throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 71

R/ Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. (R.)
2. In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. (R.)
3. The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts. Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall serve him. (R.)
4. For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. (R.)

St Michael's Parish Contacts

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Website: nowraparish.org.au Incorporates the Church Communities of St Michael, Nowra; St Patrick, Berry Sacred Heart, Bomaderry; Mary, Help of Christians, Culburra; St Joseph, Kangaroo Valley; Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

The Epiphany of the Lord
4 January 2009



The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord (Manifestation)

The very ancient Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the fact that Israel's Messiah is Saviour of the entire world

Through the prayerful reflection of generations, the Gospel event that we know as the Epiphany has come to be regarded as having practical and far reaching implications for all believers. *"In an age of globalization, the celebration of Epiphany takes on more importance than ever. The vision of Christ is a light for the whole world. The vision of Christ calls together the whole world and all its peoples. The vision of Christ calls for a healing of divisions and openness to learn from all people. The vision of Christ calls for a just world order – trade policies that respect the economic opportunities of all people especially the poor..... The story of the Magi has implications for many aspects of Church ministry. No one is to be excluded from the light of Christ. Whether we are young or old, female or male, rich or poor, black or white, from the east or the west, from a famous school or a very ordinary one, employed or unemployed, we are all invited to experience the epiphany..."* (Centre of Concern – Jesuit Fathers USA). The Feast reminds us that the gift of salvation is for all.

We are all obliged to seek the Truth on life's pilgrimage and to share the message.

Sunday Masses for the Holiday Season:

Nowra:...Vigil 6pm, 8.00am, 9.30am & 6.00pm

Berry:..... 8.00am

Bomaderry:.....9.30am

Culburra:.....Vigil 6.00pm, and 8.00 a.m.

Vincentia:..... Vigil 6.00pm, 8.00 & 9.30am

Kangaroo Valley: 11.00.am.

S'haven Heads: Vigil 6.00.p.m. **(Jan 10th only)**

MASSES DURING THE WEEK

Nowra: Mon. 7.00.a.mTues/Wed/Thurs. 8.15 a.m.

Fri. 7.00am and 11.30am, Sat. 9.00 a.m.

Berry: Tues. 5.30 pm

Culburra : **Please note no Mass this Thursday**

Vincentia: Mon/Thurs/Fri 8.00 am,

Tues/Wed 5.30 pm

Kangaroo Valley: Mon/ Tues/Thurs and Sat. 8.00am

(Divine Office 10.40am), Wed Mass 6.15am. (Lauds at 6am)

CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION

Nowra: Sat 11.30am – 12.30pm,

Culburra: Sat. 5.30pm

Vincentia: Sat 5.00 – 5.30pm

Feastdays:

Sunday Jan. 11th. The Baptism of the Lord.

Sat. Jan. 17th Santo Nino- The Philippino Annual Festival Mass – 9.00.a.m. at St. Michael's

CLERGY OF THE PARISH: Ph: 4423 1712

Fr Patrick Faherty PP,

Fr Richard Healey.....

Fr Leo Duck (Vincentia).....Ph: 4441 5571

Fr Ronan Kilgannon (K/Valley)

A Prayer as we enter the New Year :

Bless us, O Lord, and bless the time and seasons yet to unfold.

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart;

And fill this new year with your peace and compassion, that we may be glad and rejoice all the days of our life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COORDINATOR:

Bishop Peter Ingham recently appointed Loretta Brinkman as Diocesan Coordination of Youth Ministry, as a follow-on from WYD 08. Loretta is a graduate of the University of Western Sydney, and a parishioner of the Parish of Eagle Vale in the Macarthur. She has been involved in a variety of ministries, including Youth, Liturgy and Pastoral Councils. As a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society she served for sometime as the Society's NSW/ACT Youth representative. She was also very involved with WYD08 preparation. Loretta is looking forward to taking up her Diocesan ministry early in the New Year. We pray God's blessing on her work.

Looking at the Bishop's Calendar for 2009, **Confirmation** for the Nowra Parish is listed as Sunday 21 June.

Columban Calendars still available @ \$7 per St Vincent de Paul - Nowra

Quote: "The disabled are a living reminder to the world of the essential values of the heart without which knowledge, power and action lose their meaning and purpose." ..Jean Vanier -L'Arche.

ST MICHAEL'S PARISH COOKBOOK – a



fundraising event for World Youth Day 2008 – there are still copies available – **SELLING AT \$2.00 A COPY** – all proceeds to the St Vincent de Paul Society. Please note two corrections if not already inserted in the booklet. **P 45**

(Lemon Cake): ingredients should include 1 cup of sugar; **P 57.** Strawberry Cream Butterfly Cakes should read 60g. of butter.



We prayerfully remember the recently deceased: **Joan Dunning** (formerly Nowra) **Don Kennedy** (architect –Wollongong). Also **Joyce McMahon, John Lane, Betty Colnan, and Rona Wakefield** whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in eternal peace.