

St. John's Church School
Epiphany

EPIPHANY – GOD'S GLORY REVEALED IN CHRIST – in obedience to the word of God, the wise men come to worship Jesus as Lord.

Special Event

Bible Text: St. Matthew 2:1-15. "...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."
v.2

Key Point: The very word, "Epiphany," means "light." It means the sort of "light" that comes with sudden understanding, or when something that has been a mystery is suddenly revealed. Think of a cartoon where the cartoon character is shown with a light bulb over his head. Epiphany always comes with an exclamation point! It is a surprise, a sudden enlightenment. This is what happened to the eastern Kings who journeyed by the light of the Star in the East all the way to Bethlehem. When they saw the child, they knew that he was the One they were seeking. They had understanding: the "light bulb went off over their heads." The child in Bethlehem had been prophesied by the prophets of old, and the Wise Men had studied the scriptures and had observed the sky, so when the Star appeared, they were prepared to make the journey to go to worship Him.

Lesson: The wise men from the East had spent much time in study and preparation for the coming of the Lord. They probably didn't know where they were going, or even what they would find when they got there, but they knew that they must be obedient to the scriptures, and when the time came, they made the long journey in great faith. Taking their most precious gifts to offer the new King, they made their way following the Star. When they arrived in Galilee, they made sure that they visited King Herod, who pretended to be as interested in worshipping the new King as they were. However, they were not deceived when he asked them to report to him the whereabouts of the child, but instead, went home via a route that would not take them back to King Herod, thus avoiding him altogether, and kept the child a secret. The kings were amazed at what they saw, and we can only wonder how they must have felt when they gazed upon him with his mother and Joseph. How they must have wondered what the future would hold for this child. Perhaps they knew a lot from what the scriptures foretold.

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What should we learn from the wise kings who came to worship the baby Jesus?

We learn that, in order to be prepared to do God's mission, we should study His holy Word, as he has revealed it in the Bible.

We learn that we must have the faith that causes bold action when we are called upon to do God's will.

We learn to worship the Lord reverently.

We learn to give to the Lord. He has given us so much. What can we give back to Him?

These are some things to ponder at Epiphany. Let us have the kind of faith the wise men had, and their attitude of worship, built in them from their years of study and their desire to seek the Lord.

Father O'Brien shared a poem by T.S. Eliot, "The Journey of the Magi", at the ECW meeting last year. It sheds light on the magnitude of what the kings may have gone through. Can you imagine, really, these kings, having lived lives that were pampered and over indulged, loading up a camel and setting out in the wilderness? Not really knowing where they were going and what they would find. And how life changing, to realize everything you thought you knew and how you lived before was about to change forever. Then, to return home by a different route and follow through with their life changing epiphany. Really incredible and what a wonderful example they set! I have included the lovely poem for you to enjoy.

The Journey of the Magi

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The was deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,

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And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty, and charging high prices.:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.
All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we lead all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I have seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.