

Revd Michael Burns
Christ Church West Wimbledon
Sermon : January 3rd, 2021
“Epiphany”

SERMON – EPIPHANY 2021

Today, as we have heard, we are celebrating the Epiphany. The word means ‘showing’ or ‘revealing’ – and when those wise men arrived with their presents, their gifts, God was showing or revealing himself to the whole world – not just to his chosen people, but to everyone, to all the nations. Whatever country you come from, whatever your background, whatever you look like, whatever language you speak, God is saying to all of us today – I am here for you and no one is left out. You don’t have to have the right pedigree to know God. You don’t have to pass any exams to know God. You are welcome just as those strange and exotic visitors were welcome.

Gold is the gift to present to a king, which emphasises Jesus’ identity as the long-awaited messiah, the anointed king. **Frankincense** is the fitting offering to God, which implies Jesus’ divine nature. **Myrrh** was used in the embalming process of those who had died, which points to Jesus’ purpose for coming, his death on the cross.

We sometimes get so interested in the gifts that the wise men were bringing that we forget what brought them there in the first place. It was God who had called

these wise men from other nations to be there when Jesus was still a baby, so he could welcome them as well. They were present in the stable, representing all the nations, so that when God welcomed them, he was welcoming each of us.

Their arrival meant that things certainly changed for Mary and Joseph. Our crib has changed - the Magi and their gifts have joined the shepherds – because Jesus has gone from the cosy to being revealed, being shown to the world. The world is let into the stable – and some would say that the world has never left the stable and still only thinks of Jesus the Baby – not seeing Christ the King, not acknowledging him as God – and certainly never recognising that he was to suffer and die for us.

Mary would probably have, even reluctantly, welcomed the Wise Men in to see the Christ child – realising that he was not hers but was for the whole world. God wanted these outsiders, these foreigners, to be among the first to meet his Son, because Jesus had come into the world for everybody, and not just for the Jewish people.

We have to do the same – to let people see and experience what we have been privileged to see and experience. As Christians we need to remember that the Good News of the Gospel is for everyone. Amen.