

EPIPHANY 2015

Today's feast of the Epiphany continues in a wonderful way the joyous celebration of Christmas. It celebrates the manifestation to the world of the new-born child of Bethlehem. This feast is a powerful reminder that the birth of Jesus is not a secret but is indeed good news for all the world to hear, good news that brings salvation, good news that brings hope.

The feast of the Epiphany also reminds us of these mysterious characters known as the wise men coming from the East, coming from a distant land to worship the Christ-child of Bethlehem. Legend has it that they were probably not religious men and yet they are given a sign; the sight of the star in the sky. They follow that star and so find themselves on a journey of discovery, a journey of faith and encounter. Today's feast reminds us of our own journey in life, our journey of faith and the signs that God gives to remind us of his incredible love for us.

The wise men coming from the East responded to a sign and set out on a journey. Their encounter with Herod put them in danger. Herod is a sign of darkness. But their encounter with Jesus is a sign of light, a sign of hope and a sign of faith. They bring to Jesus these ancient gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They recognise Jesus as the Messiah and redeemer. They come to worship and do him homage.

At Christmas we exchanged gifts with friends and loved ones. There is a great spirit of generosity at this time and I certainly noticed this in the parishes of Kensington and Flemington. But it is always a delight to hear about a special story of generosity. In Wednesday's edition of the Age, I read about a woman who was on duty in a nursing home over the Christmas season. Some local residents phoned the facility to ask if any residents were going to be on their own on Christmas Day and could they visit them. Three young people in the late 20s came dressed in Christmas outfits with bells jingling. They sat with some of the residents and brought them gifts. But their greatest gift, of course, was the gift of their thoughtfulness and generous spirit. Such a story really restores our faith in humanity when there has been so much darkness and suffering lately. Such a story speaks to us about bringing light into the lives of others.

Today's feast of the Epiphany reminds us not only of the journey of the Magi from the East but our journey of faith now that we have celebrated the birth of the Christ-child of Bethlehem. That birth fills our lives with radiant joy and wonderful light. And these are the gifts we carry within us every day because our lives, like the Magi, have been transformed by the birth of the Christ-child. Let us come before the Christ-child and offer him the gifts of our lives. Transformed by the radiant joy of his birth, we pray for the grace to bring light, joy, hope, unity and peace into the lives of others as begin this new year of faith.