

Holy Trinity & St Peter South Wimbledon Sermons

Epiphany All-Age Service

3 January 2010

Sermon notes by Pamela Stevenson, Church of the Ascension Pollards Hill

Today we celebrate the arrival of the wise men at Mary and Joseph's home town to worship the Christ child. We call it the feast of the Epiphany. Epiphany means "showing forth" – it is the time when Christ was shown to the whole world and not just the Jews. We know they had a long journey, and so it was possible that they did not get to Bethlehem for several months; or even three years.

The story of Christmas is very much about journeys.

- Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem.
- The shepherds travelled over fields to see the baby.
- The wise men travelled from the East – a very long journey.

First a quiz:

How did the wise men know that a baby had been born?

Where did they travel from? (*East*)

How did they travel?

How did the chief priests and the teachers know where Jesus would be born? (*OT Prophet Micah*)

Why did Herod want to know where the child was? (*He did not want anyone to usurp his place as King*)

How did the Holy Family escape from Herod? (*Flight into Egypt*)

How did the wise men know when they had arrived? (*Star stopped over the stable*)

Now the wise men brought three special gifts with them (what were they?) – *gold (symbolising kingship), frankincense (symbolising priesthood) and myrrh (symbolising suffering)*.

So the journey of the wise men was A LONG ONE – a journey to search for truth, and much of that journey would have been in darkness, with only the light of a star to guide them. So often nowadays we don't see the stars very clearly; our towns and cities suffer from light pollution, but if we go into the countryside where it is very dark, we can see the night skies very clearly; a magnificent sight.

We too are on a journey today – a journey of faith; and journey which does not end until we get to heaven.

Sometimes our lives are dark, and we lose our way, we get depressed, we turn away from God – but always he is there to guide us and to beckon us on.

Sometimes we find God in unexpected places and in unexpected people just as the wise men did; but they did not give up and go home. They were patient and they persevered on their journey, with great faith; whatever the difficulties they faced. They followed the light that led them to Christ.

And so at the beginning of this New Year, let us commit our lives again to Christ and may He always be the Light on our paths. Amen