



SAINT THOMAS CHURCH FIFTH AVENUE
in the City of New York
The Reverend Canon Carl F. Turner, Rector
www.SaintThomasChurch.org

Thursday, January 6, 2022
The Epiphany

Procession and Solemn Eucharist
5:30pm

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A Sermon by
The Rev. Prisca Lee-Pae, *Associate for Pan-Asian Ministry*
on
Matthew 2:1-12
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Sermon for the Feast of the Epiphany

Epiphany is a feast day that celebrates the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ.

In the Western Church, the feast principally commemorates the visit of the Magi, wise men from the east to the infant Jesus, which is seen as evidence that Christ, the Jewish Messiah, came also for the salvation of Gentiles.

It is a festival to commemorate that Jesus Christ, who came to this earth as the way, the truth, and the life transcends the boundaries between God and human and between people.

It is the wise men from the east who lead us in the gospel message we hear today.
How wise they were can be seen through today's story.

How did they know that one of the many stars in the sky was the one that would lead them to Christ?
It is unknown how far from the east they came, but at that time, traveling such a long way, even traveling to an unfamiliar place, would have been a dangerous thing to risk their lives as well as to suffer great inconvenience.

The fact that they were wise was that they knew that there was someone they had to meet even with the inconvenience and the risk.

And even though the Christ they had so hard to meet was a little baby born in a shabby place, they did not disappoint or doubt, they were willing to offer up their precious treasures and worship this baby.
Their wisdom does not disappoint us until the very end.

They kept Christ by returning to their own country another way, not to Herod.
We learn a lot from these wise men.

It is the wisdom to take inconvenience and risk for the truth, to not judge by social customs, the wisdom to see Christ in the sacks that a young poor couple hold in a shabby place that smells of animals, the wisdom to give the most precious things that they have for the truth, and above all, the wisdom of knowing how to face Christ.

“They came to worship him.”

Herod the king wanted to kill him, and the chief priests and scribes of the people helped Herod. Because, for them it was more important to protect their power, possessions, and honor than to protect the truth.

When wise men from the east came to an unfamiliar place leaving their own country, they became strangers, the weak and powerless.

They offered up their possessions by offering gold, myrrh, and frankincense.
They gave up their honor before him by falling down on their knees in humility to the newborn.
In this way, the way to follow the truth is inevitably at a crossroads between protecting what we have and committing ourselves to the truth.

At that moment, I hope that we will recall the wisdom of the wise men and the folly of Herod and others. Just as those who chose not the folly that leads to wickedness but the wisdom that leads to the light of truth came to worship the baby Jesus, so we are here to worship him.

In this Gathering for Worship, in this moment, let us worship our Lord Jesus Christ with our most precious treasure, with all our hearts, in spirit and in truth.

Let me share Spiritual psalter by St. Ephraim the Syrian.

Like the apple of Thine eye preserve me, O Lord God;
defend me and beneath Thy wings shelter me from temptations.
Be the guardian of the eye, that it might not look about in the manner of a thief.
Be the guardian of the ear, that it might not perceive falsehood.
Be the guardian of the lips, that slander, judgement, criticism and idle words
might not come forth from them.
Be the guardian of the heart, that it might not be inclined to evil and might not work iniquity.
Grant us, O Lord, knowledge, both of what we should do and of how to set about it.
Grant us, O Lord, that we may be sweeter to Thee than fragrances and perfumes.
Grant us, O Lord, that we may love Thee and hate the world.
Grant us, O Lord, to acquire Only Thee rather than all transient possessions.
Grant us, O Lord, to bring Thee choice gifts.
Grant us, O Lord, to burn three aromatic censers before Thee.
Grant us, O Lord, to light for Thee three brightly burning lamps:
the spirit, the soul and the body, these three gifts for the One Trinity.
Let us dedicate the spirit to the Father,
the soul to the Son and the body to the Holy Spirit,
the Spirit which will raise it again from dust.
O Father, consecrate our spirit to Thyself! O Son, consecrate our soul to Thyself!
O Holy Spirit, consecrate to Thyself our body which is afflicted by sores.
Grant us, O Lord, to rejoice in Thee, and mayest thou rejoice in us in the last day.
To Thee is praise, from the spirit, soul and body. And unto us be Thy mercies.