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Reflection for Epiphany

**Our lives must become the star
 that brings an unbelieving world
 into the presence of Christ**

“Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.” The Wise Men, suitably costumed, will have presented a colourful backdrop to the countless Nativity plays that have been performed in our primary schools and churches over the Christmas period. Their restless journeying, following the distant star, represents the longing of our sinful humanity for healing and fulfilment. Without Christ, the Light of the world, we continue to walk in darkness. Our confusion is compounded all the more by the many false stars that clamour for our attention.

The Wise Men found fulfilment when the star, so patiently followed, halted over the place where the child had been born. “The sight of the star filled them with delight, and, going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary and falling to their knees they did him homage.”

The delight that they experienced had been promised long ago by the Prophet Isaiah. He had promised that, with the coming of the Messiah, Israel’s long estrangement from God would be ended. The presence of God among his people would be a blessing that would reach beyond them to all

the peoples of the earth. The Gospel, with its proclamation of the Risen Lord, is not for ourselves alone. Neither is the joy that his presence brings for ourselves alone, but for the whole world. “The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness. At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart

Epiphany

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throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you; the wealth of the nations will come to you.”

As missionary disciples our lives must become the star that brings an unbelieving world into the presence of Christ. This we shall become to the extent that we allow Christ to enlighten our hidden selves, guiding us to the height and depth of his presence until, knowing the love of Christ which is beyond all knowledge, we are filled with the utter fullness of God. We must be recognised by Christ's inner light illuminating all that we do.

Before St Paul began his missionary journeys he first experienced, in the depths of his heart, the wonder of a loving God who had chosen him before the foundation of the world, chosen him to live through love in his presence. This was the revelation of the mystery entrusted to Paul. It so transformed his understanding of himself and the world that he became a light to enlighten the nation.

If we are to follow in Paul's footsteps, if we are to become disciples who reach out to the world, then we must begin with the question that brought the Wise Men to Bethlehem. “Where is the infant king of the Jews?” Where is God in our lives?

Frequently we shall experience our frailty as an estrangement from God's presence. We are all too aware of the many distractions that have eclipsed the presence of God in our lives. Like the Wise Men, who first experienced Christ as a distant glimmer on the horizon, we must search our hearts for the forgotten light of his presence. Then we shall be renewed in the joy that filled the Wise Men as they presented their gifts to the Lord. Let us bring our hope and longing to Christ this Epiphany.

Bishop David McGough