



Epiphany 2021

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:-

When I was very young, a tradition began in my family which continued until my father's death in 1976. Each year, my parents would write a carol and send it to all their friends and relations (like we send those Christmas letters now). Year after year, Mom would write the words and Dad the music and eventually they were published in a collection called A Wreath of Carols. Each was unique and precious and I still sing them to myself as we decorate hearth and home for the holidays. What began as a simple sheet of music scotch-taped to our front door became a "full family enterprise" as each of the kids was roped into the distribution: my older brother would fold the carol sheet, I would address and stamp the envelope, my little sister would place the carol into the envelope and my younger brother would lick the envelope and seal it. Then, Dad would load up our little red wagon and off he would go with the four of us in tow to the post office to send the cards on their way. By 1975, we were sending out more than two hundred carols a season and these were a source of joy to many of our friends and a sure sign to them that when the new carol arrived in their post box, Christmas was nigh! I miss that part of my growing up but I try to keep the memory alive by humming as many of the twenty-four as I can recall as I go about our own seasonal tradition of decorating and preparing for the birth of Jesus.

Many people think that Christmas is only December 25 and that Boxing Day signals the end of the season. How wrong they are because the first chapter of the story of Jesus (His birth) does not draw to a close until a time in Nazareth many months later when the Holy Family is visited by some VIPs (Very Important Persons) from far and away. These are the Magi (Greek for Wise Ones) and they have come through a long and dangerous journey, following some sort of astronomical phenomenon which led them from their homeland to a small house in the outskirts of the village of Nazara in Palestine. Tradition tells us that, among other offerings, these powerful officials lay symbolic gifts before the Christ-child as tokens that they recognized that this infant was in very truth God of gods and Lord of lords. One gave gold, sign and symbol of our human life; a second offered frankincense, a spice burned in religious rituals, sign and symbol that this child was the heart and soul of spiritual life and a third gave myrrh, an

ointment used to embalm the dead, sign and symbol of the power this child would have over time and space. In other words, these Wise Men offered all of creation to the child. Previously, Jesus had been given a wool blanket to keep him warm by shepherds in Bethlehem and food from the townsfolk. In return, Jesus offered them his outstretched hands and laughter and love.

Epiphany (January 6) gives us the chance to offer to God the gifts with which we have been blessed. For some, that is seen in tangible form of financial offerings; for others the gifts come in a myriad of shapes and sizes. As we move towards this “gift-offering” by the Magi, perhaps you and I might think about the gifts we are able and willing to offer – the gift can be as simple as committing to call one other person once a week just to touch base; perhaps you might shovel someone’s driveway or walkway; offer to pick up groceries; write “no reason” cards to someone... the possibilities are endless (at least once we put COVID to rest eternally!) The important thing is that the gift does not have to be expensive or large; all it needs to be is heartfelt. What can you do to extend the Christmas season for others? Each one of us, young and old, rich and poor are vital cogs in ministry for Jesus – just as each of my siblings and I were deemed vital to the sending of my parents’ gift of love and hope, so too we as community can witness the truth that “God so loved the world that He sent His only son Jesus” and for this we sing our unending hymn, “Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!”

Wishing you all the blessings of this holy season, I am your brother  
Fr. Michael Fleming

#### Parish List Update

In an effort to save money and the environment, we would like to be able to send our letters out electronically as much as possible. If you would like to continue to receive our letters and have an email address that we don't already have, please send us an email at [infoholytrinitymetcalfe@gmail.com](mailto:infoholytrinitymetcalfe@gmail.com) and we will add you to the list for our seasonal letters. If you do not have email but do still want to receive our letters please let us know by calling Reverend Michael (613-825-1811) or one of our wardens- Kay (613-821-2501) or Karen (613-445-1135). This will help us greatly in updating our parish list.  
Thanks very much.