

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they returned to their home by another way. (ST. MATTHEW 2: 1-11)

The “they” in this brief piece are, of course, the Magi, the Wise Men who are central figures in the nativity tale. I won’t really elaborate on who they were and what they were about here because we are called this week to focus on the them of JOY, not gifts !!!

Led by The Light, these strangers had been given an entry into the very gift the Creator offered to all creation – to live in The Light and now they had the chance to “let your light shine so that others may see your good works and give thanks to God”. They offered what they had and as important as the gold, spices and myrrh are, what they offered of greatest value was – THEMSELVES. They knelt in awe, wonder and JOY before the infant and pledged their hearts and souls to him. Matthew ends the story with these words, “and they returned home by a different way”; we tend to miss this in our reading of the story but to me it is a central thing: that these men of great wisdom and honour among their people were changed and transformed by entering the Creator’s Light and embracing the One who reached out his hands to them in fellowship, love and joy. While they gave of the wealth of their world, somehow they understood that what was wanted by the child was the greatest gift each could offer – their love and commitment to the cause of righteousness and justice. The infant who reaches out to us at this time of the year continues to invite us to live lives of extraordinary ordinariness which is imbued with a deep sense of the presence of the sacred in our midst. We too are invited to enter the sacred space by simply saying, “Here I am, Lord; your servant waits” and then offering our light to others and pledging to walk with them from darkness into light, from sorrow into joy, from despair into hope. As we move through this week, let us all think of how we share The Light and how we receive the gift from others and give thanks to God for the Light Way.

Alternate Readings: Psalm 145: 5-10 Isaiah 35: 1-10 Luke 2: 8-14

Reflective Prayer for this Week:

Lord, we come to you this week seeking your love and your presence . Help us to see the way you wish each of us to live and give us the wisdom, strength and zeal to come home in a new and different way. Help us to understand how blessed each of us is and what incredible gifts each of us has been endowed with. Teach us and encourage us to use your gifts for the building of the bonds of justice and love and hope which are the hallmarks of Kingdom living. May our lives be reflections of the divine life which surrounds us. Help us to live this week as joyful ambassadors and heralds for your Son, our Friend Jesus. Amen