

Perhaps, like me, you already started thinking about Epiphany in December this time around!

For on 21 December (the winter solstice) an alignment of the planets (Jupiter & Saturn) made them look like one brilliant star. These 'great conjunctions' are very rare events which have been recorded for centuries. The Star of Bethlehem that guided the three wise men to the place of Jesus Christ's birth may have been a great conjunction too.

On this Epiphany Sunday, we read about the wise men or magi who travelled from the east, led by a star to visit Jesus, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And in that moment, the Messiah, lying in a lowly manger, is revealed to them.

We do not know how long it took the wise men to travel to find Jesus; they went to Jerusalem first and then on to Bethlehem. These visitors came a long way. They came from abroad and they were accepted.

The significance of the visit is to show that Jesus came into the world for everyone, in all places and for all times. We as a church should be always seeking to model that. Our reading does not tell us what happened after the wise men returned home. But I don't think it's too much to assume that they didn't keep what they'd seen and heard to themselves.

We heard in our reading of the shadow over the visit of the wise men who had been ordered to tell King Herod when they had found the child. But at the crib, they found God himself in Jesus. At the moment of crisis they came to a decision. They worshipped the true King and returned home by another way.

Jesus, the light of the world is for all. He is there for the wise men as they decide which side they are on. He is there for us, even in the darkness of past months, keeping the candle of hope burning in our hearts. May he help us to share that flame of hope with others. We ask this in his name.

Amen.