

## Epiphany, by Malcolm Guite

It might have been just someone else's story,  
Some chosen people get a special king.  
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,  
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.  
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,  
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;  
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,  
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.  
They did not know his name but still they sought him,  
They came from elsewhere but still they found;  
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,  
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.  
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice  
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

Malcolm writes:

The Feast of the Epiphany, which celebrates the arrival of the three wise men at the manger in Bethlehem has a special mystery and joy to it. Until now the story of the coming Messiah has been confined to Israel, the covenant people, but here suddenly, mysteriously, are three Gentiles who have intuited that his birth is good news for them too. Here is an Epiphany, a revelation, that the birth of Christ is not one small step for a local religion but a great leap for all mankind. I love the way that traditionally the three wise men (or kings) are shown as representing the different races and cultures and languages of the world. I love the combination in their character of diligence and joy. They 'seek diligently', but they 'rejoice with exceeding great joy'! I love the way they loved and followed a star, but didn't stop at the star, but rather let the star lead them to something beyond itself. Surely that is a pattern for all wise contemplation of nature whether in art or science.

One can return constantly to the mystery of the Epiphany and always find more but here is a little sonnet which particularly focuses on the way their arrival on the scene suddenly includes us as Gentiles into what has been, up to this point an exclusively Jewish story. The last line of this poem is a little nod in the direction of Tennyson's great poem Ulysses

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## WELCOME TO ST JOHN ON BETHNAL GREEN



### THE SECOND SUNDAY IN CHRISTMASTIDE 2 JANUARY 2022

Today's Hymns - Celebration Hymnal: 573, 30, 274, 62

#### *Introductory Sentence*

The Word, the true light which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world

#### *The Collect*

Almighty God, in the birth of your Son you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word, and shown us the fullness of your love: help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love that we may know the fullness of his joy; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

#### **Amen**

#### *First Reading: Ecclesiasticus 2.4. 1-12*

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

Wisdom praises herself, and tells of her glory in the midst of her people. In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory: 'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist. I dwelt in the highest heavens, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. Alone I compassed the vault of heaven and traversed the depths of the abyss. Over waves of the sea, over all the earth, and over every people and nation I have held sway. Among all these I sought a resting-place; in whose territory should I abide? 'Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, "Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance." Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. In the holy tent I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion. Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting-place, and in Jerusalem was my domain. I took root in an honoured people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage.

*Second Reading: Ephesians 1. 3-14*

A reading from the Letter to Paul to the church in Ephesus

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

*The Gospel: John 1. 10-18*

Alleluia, Alleluia

The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light, but those who do what is true come to the light.

**Alleluia**

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me." ) From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

*Post Communion Sentence*

The young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Emmanuel.

*Post Communion Prayer*

All praise to you, almighty God and heavenly king, who sent your Son into the world to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin: grant that, as we are born again in him, so he may continually dwell in us and reign on earth as he reigns in heaven, now and for ever. **Amen**

## CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY AT ST JOHN'S

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January (2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY IN CHRISTMASTIDE)**

10am Parish Mass

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> (St Genevieve)**

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> (St Titus)**

1pm Said Mass

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> (St Simeon the Stylite)**

9am Morning Prayer

7pm Said Mass

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> (St Guarinus)**

9am Morning Prayer

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> (St Lucian of Antioch)**

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> (St Julian the Hospitaller)**

9.15am Morning Prayer

9.30-10.30am Office Hour in church, for booking of Baptisms, etc

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> (THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY)**

9.15am Morning Prayer

10am Parish Mass

## STREAMED SERVICES

The new COVID variant means that we need to proceed very carefully with our services in church. No-one should feel duty bound to attend and it is important that you consider your own circumstances in deciding whether to come to church. Mask wearing, using sanitiser and maintaining social distancing are all as important as before. I am monitoring the advice from Government, Tower Hamlets Public Health and the Church of England and will not hesitate to return to celebrating our services in a closed church if circumstances warrant it, enabling you to join with me either in the Act of Spiritual Communion or through the Zoom stream which, at the moment, continues to be available on Sundays.

Here is the information for the Sunday Zoom stream:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85327692664?pwd=MjNBd3BBbWRTdDJQT2xrQnFQRzdwdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 2769 2664 Passcode: 850665