

Epiphany - 6 January



On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany (from greek epiphaino: show) - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were they called kings - by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given.

Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior

Pray with your shoes

With the rush of Christmas almost over, we tumble into the New Year, sleep for a couple of days, take down the decorations and plod back to work, school or our normal routines. There's a pleasure about getting back to normality, but there's also the challenge of looking forward to what the year will bring.

Not all of us want this New Year. For some of us we know it will bring separations and loss: children growing up and growing away, moving away, family and friends moving on.

For some of us it brings extra work as we take on new responsibilities, study for exams, or look after others. For some we have to start again; to learn to be on our own, perhaps through moving away or the loss of those we have lived with for many years and decades.

Just for this month, while you put on your shoes, ask God to be with you in the day ahead. To walk ahead of you, to be by your side and close behind you: to surround you with his presence. For it is his day that we are walking into and not ours. Let his will be done, and not ours.

And then as you take your shoes off, see what you can thank God for from that day together.



To help to remind you, why not leave a single shoe by the main door – that might get visitors asking too.

Life is too short for us to do everything we want to do;
but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do.
Anon.