

## Reflection for the Feast of the Epiphany

*“We Three Kings of Orient are Bearing gifts we traverse a far.”*

The song “We Three Kings” is familiar to many of us and this song is closely identified with the Feast of Epiphany that we celebrate today. This song was written by John Henry Hopkins Jr. in the year 1857. At the time that he composed the carol, Hopkins served as the Rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Mr. Hopkins also wrote the Carol for the Christmas Pageant in New York City.

It is only in the Gospel of Matthew that the Magi or Wise Men from the East are mentioned. The Gospel of Luke mentions the shepherds in the field keeping night watch over their flock. The Gospels of Mark and John do not cover the birth of Jesus they start their Gospels with the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Matthew and Luke saw a need to share information about the birth of Jesus, for they knew that as people were informed about how and where the birth took place, they would have a better understanding of God’s plan of salvation for all humanity. Traditionally the shepherds who came to see Jesus the night he was born are seen as representing the fact that Jesus came to fulfill God’s covenant with God’s chosen people. The three wise men are seen as a reminder that Jesus came for all people and all ages.

This year with all that is happening in the world a person might ask themselves what the Feast of the Epiphany does for us today in the year 2021. With the pandemic many people in the world have stated that we need to be practical and follow the science, which makes a great deal of sense. If our community, our nation, and our world is going to overcome the pandemic we will need to work together and trust the science, but there might be more that we need to do. Recently, at one of the hospitals in the United States that was given the vaccine for Covid-19 it was discovered that the vials that were supposed to contain just 5 doses of the vaccine contained 6. Staff at the hospital are calling what happened a miracle.

For me what happened in the hospital is a reminder of the fact that over 2 thousand years ago there was a group of people who were following the science of their day and witnessed in the night sky a manifestation of a newborn king. These three wise men, these three Kings, left their families, their homes, and went in search of the newborn King. Yes, it is important today to be practical to follow the science, but we must also be able to think outside of the box, we must be able to know that the impossible is possible. Who would have thought a year ago the world would be able to not just develop one but several vaccines for Covid-19, in less than a year? Most people would have considered it impossible to develop a vaccine for a new virus in less than one year. But once again the impossible is possible, people of faith might call these events a manifestation of God’s love, others might just call it a miracle and still others might call it hard work. As a person of faith, I see God’s hand in everything, but He does invite us to be a part of the good things that happen in this world.

As we look back on the history of faith, we see God the creator of the world reaching out to us in many different ways, but for us to be able to fully embrace God and what He does for us, we have to do our part. Today on the Feast of Epiphany we have an amazing example of three wise man from the East that followed a star at its rising to find the newborn King. The wise men became a part of God’s salvific plan, because they were willing to do their part. As we do our part in this world, and with God’s grace, we will be able to confront and overcome all the challenges we face in this world. At the end of the day may we take a moment and look to the night sky and may we see what the wise men saw in the same night sky that compelled them to leave everything and follow said star. God has and always will until the end of time be working in the world and inviting us to be a part of His salvific plan for humanity. May we see with eyes of faith so that we are able to see beyond the practical and the science so that we clearly see the star in the night sky and know that God is working in the world.