

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Behold the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 71)

ANTIPHON: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

RESPONSE: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

LECTOR: O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. **R.**

LECTOR: In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**

LECTOR: The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts. Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall serve him. **R.**

LECTOR: For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) We have seen his star in the East, and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

NEXT WEEK (Baptism of the Lord Year C) Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; Psalm 103; Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

*The Majellan
continues to
inspire*

The Majellan

The Majellan magazine has been published by the Redemptorists for 76 years and is still considered one of Australia's favourite Catholic family magazines. Stories assist families with the struggles and challenges of everyday life, as well as spiritual guidance when it is needed most. Further details and subscription rates at: www.majellan.media



majellan

The profound significance of incense



January 5, 2025 Epiphany of the Lord, Year C

We may not use incense in our liturgies as often as we did in the past, but there is something very precious about the reverencing with incense of the body God has given us at the end of a funeral Mass. The great feast of the Epiphany, which we are celebrating, reminds us that frankincense was among the symbolic gifts brought to the child in Bethlehem by those mysterious wise men from the east.

In his gospel, Matthew is at pains to ensure that his audience – his own Jewish community – realise that Christ had come not only to redeem them, but all peoples. This feast completes the Christmas story: it reminds us that Christ is to be made manifest to all the nations. The prophet, Isaiah, sets the scene: the light begins in Jerusalem, but will attract the nations, who will flock with their camels and their gifts of gold and incense. St Paul in his letter reinforces the message by assuring the Ephesians that pagans can now share the same inheritance as his people. And Matthew uses the “wise men” to reveal the mystery of Christ.

Matthew's story is rich in symbolism as he goes out of his way to ensure that we make all the necessary connections: he reminds us of the prophet Micah's reference to Bethlehem as well as Isaiah's mention of the gifts. He wants us to reflect on the fact that the Spirit of God must have prompted these men into action. to make their pilgrimage and be led to “fall on their knees” in homage to the child, whom

they were able to recognise as the promised Messiah.

They clearly possessed those mighty gifts of the Holy Spirit: gifts of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, which enabled them to judge that God would give them the courage to undertake their undoubtedly hazardous pilgrimage and the discernment to realise that Herod was up to no good – a clear pointer to the persecutions that awaited Jesus and his followers.

Then, when they see the child, they are filled with awe and reverence, going down on their knees to pay homage. Make no mistake, their gifts are also full of meaning. The gold speaks to us of this new kingdom to be established in our hearts: a kingdom of love, hope, forgiveness and reconciliation. The myrrh speaks to us of the suffering foretold by the prophets, and the need for Christ's body to be anointed after his death.

And finally, we come to the frankincense: this invites us to be like the wise men and recognise that Jesus is truly the Son of God. At the end of his gospel, Matthew will remind us that this act of faith was made by a foreigner, the centurion, as he stood by the cross. May we go home reminding ourselves that Jesus, in turn, told us that we are his adopted brothers and sisters, also children of his Father: hence the profound significance of the incense at a funeral Mass.

Timothy J Buckley CSsR

© Majellan Media 2025