

**Reflection on the Gospel- Feast of the Epiphany Year A
(Matthew 2:1-12)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

God's presence is revealed to us in diverse ways: we can read the "story" of God's universe; we can search out the meaning of our dreams; we can learn from our own and others' experience; and we can listen to the voice of our sacred scriptures. Such learning has nothing to do with naïve dependence on our own judgment or on the judgement of others. It has more to do with a way of being in the world that involves openness to the unexpected and a critical and careful communal dialogue between our life experience and our faith tradition. A deep awareness of our place in the Earth community and kinship with the other-than-human teaches us respect for all being and respect for its power to lead us beyond ourselves.

Epiphany is the feast of the wise ones or astrologers "from the East" who are led beyond themselves and their immediate location by the rising of a star. They form their own preliminary hypothesis and travel west to search out the meaning of this sign. Their questioning in Jerusalem attracts the attention of Herod, the Roman-appointed "king of the Jews" who turns to the official interpreters of the Jewish scriptures for information on the birthplace of the Messiah. They follow the star that leads them to Bethlehem, to the new born child, the incarnate Wisdom of God. The gospel does not stipulate how many wise ones or magi come to pay homage to the child who has already been named in the text as Emmanuel, God-with-us. There is no indication in the story as to whether they are men or women or both. The three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh have been traditionally associated with three different characters, usually kings, of diverse nationality and colour. These strangers are the first to recognise "God-with-us" in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. They also come to recognise in a dream the duplicity of Herod, who senses a threat to his political power from the birth of a new-born king of the Jews. They have the good sense not to accede to Herod's request to bring him word of the new-born king. They return home "by another road".

The story-teller Matthew leaves room in the tableau for the insertion of the wise ones who will emerge through the ages. There is an invitation for us to enter into Matthew's drama, to be the wise ones, to join with people of different cultures, to engage in our own search for Wisdom, and to follow the star that leads to truth and lasting peace. There is also an invitation to be wary of those who find their positions threatened by a different sort of power, power based on vulnerability and openness to new life.

BULLETIN FOR THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Parish Address: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East. 3350

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**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 9th JANUARY 2017**

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	11.00 am in Mercy Centre
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
SATURDAY:	Sacrament of Reconciliation at 10.00 am

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

2nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

READINGS -	First:	Isaiah 49:3.5-6
	Second:	1 Corinthians 1:1-3
	Gospel:	John 1:29-34

RECENT DEATHS: John Thomas, Brenton Simpkin.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Barbara Keirl, Mick Kent, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter McDonald (Ocean Grove), Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 1:** L. Noonon ©, G. Clarkson, L. Mullane.

Next Week: **Team 2:** B. Perkins ©, F. Nolan, J. Lewis.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,399.00
	Loose money:	\$ 300.00
	Direct debits:	\$ <u>1,100.00</u>
		\$ 2,799.00
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 926.00



CHILD SAFETY IN OUR PARISH

Notices, relating to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in our care, are on display in the church foyers for your information.

DIOCESAN COMMUNICATIONS

Diocesan Website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au. The website contains current news and information on the diocese and parishes and also a section for members to access resources relevant to diocesan ministries.

e-News: e-News is available to all members of the diocese and those associated with an interest in the life of the diocese. It is published every two weeks and distributed via email. You can subscribe to receive e-News on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or you are welcome to submit items for publication to enews@ballarat.catholic.org.au. News items submitted should have relevance to the life and activity of the parishes and schools of the diocese and include photos where possible.

Our Diocesan Community: ODC is published three times a year and delivered to parishes for distribution to those in the diocese. This magazine contains the good news stories of events and people in the diocese. You are welcome to submit items for publication to odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au and again, news items submitted should have relevance to the life and activity of parishes and schools of the diocese and include photos where possible.

LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM—START IN 2017

The Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Program offers low-cost opportunities for online study and formation for lay workers, both employees and volunteers. Details are on the diocesan website (link to Program on lower front page) email: amanda.smith@ballarat.catholic.org.au or phone 5337 7125.

KEEP THIS DAY FREE

Sunday, 22nd January 2017—a farewell for Fr Adrian in the Parish Hall at **midday** (following the 10.30 am Mass). Tea & coffee will be provided. Please bring a plate and any other refreshments you may require.

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Your envelopes and/or statements are available for collection this weekend.

2016 NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

If you have not already done so, will you please return your forms a.s.a.p.

MERCY CONNECT BALLARAT

Supporting refugee and asylum seeker students in local schools

Mercy Works is currently recruiting volunteers to support refugee and asylum seeker students in Ballarat schools through the Mercy Connect project. The volunteer commitment is for approximately three hours per week for four school terms. Experience working in an educational setting is preferred, but you will receive ongoing training and support. Initial training for new volunteers will be held in February 2017. Contact Paulene Barton—Mercy Connect Project Coordinator on 0417 624 330 or email mercyconnect@gmail.com for information and an application form. Applications close on 2nd February 2017.

ECOS

The Diocesan Ecological Sustainability Group (ECOS) is encouraging parishes to spread the word of *Laudato Si*. There will be information regularly available on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

“We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will not be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for ‘if the world has a beginning and if it has been created, we must enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was its Creator’ (172). Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope”. (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* #244).