**3 January |The Epiphany of the Lord | Matthew 2:1-12 | The wise men from the East**

Today’s gospel is taken from the second chapter of Matthew and gives details as to where and when Jesus was born. We are shown (epiphany means manifesting or showing forth) important details about the why of Jesus’ coming. He is the light/the star for the wise gentiles (us) who will seek him after his death. Remember, chapters 1 and 2 are the last part of the gospel to be written. The first part to take shape was the end of the gospel, the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus, and there are good gentiles there such as Pilate’s wife who has a warning dream, and the centurion who comes to faith, Truly this man was God’s Son! (27:54). The king of the Jews is a title found only at the Cross and back on the lips of the magi.

We also meet the theme of fulfilment of the prophecy in Micah 5:2. The gold, frankincense and myrrh come from Isaiah 60:6, seen by Matthew as worthy gifts for a king. The birth of the shepherd of Israel is not accepted by Herod who seeks to kill the child, jealous of his earthly crown; the religious authorities have been entrusted with the Scriptures and teach their meaning, but they also will oppose Jesus. The warning in a dream continues the dream theme found with Joseph, the husband of Mary whose dream leads to the flight into Egypt.

**ORDINARY TIME**

**10 January |1st Sunday in Ordinary Time | The Baptism of Jesus | Mark 1:7-11**

The forerunner has proclaimed the Coming One and Jesus arrives to be baptised. Jesus receives his baptism as a sign of repentance for all his people. Coming up from the water is answered by a coming down from heaven of a voice heard only by Jesus, a transaction between Father and Son, events and words in a secret beyond human experience, that only the end of the Gospel can reveal; “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

“O that you would tear the heavens and come down” (Isa 63:19). Now the barrier between heaven and earth is breached and the creative power of God, the Spirit, descends on Jesus for the renewal of Israel and the world. The dove is a sign of this new creation.

**17 January | 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time | John 1:35-42 | Come and see**

“Come and see” is the answer given to the two followers of the Baptist who follow Jesus on the strength of the witness of John. Following Jesus is a response not only to a call from Jesus but also from the Father, the source of every call to faith in the Son (17:2,6,9). The title ‘Lamb of God” is heard for the first time, its meaning to be fully revealed late in the gospel. What are disciples really looking for? Others join them. What are the deepest desires of the human heart? “Where do you live?” is one of those questions with many levels of meaning – menein – live, dwell, remain (the Spirit remains in Jesus who eternally dwells with God, and we are to remain in that love. The two represent all others who remain with Jesus for all that day (vv.39).

**24 January | 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time | Mark 1:14-20 | Repent, believe the good news**

The kingdom of God in the message of Jesus is an enormously complex symbol susceptible to many interpretations and representations. For Jesus it was the decisive intervention of God in human history through his (Jesus’) ministry and that of his followers. Through it the power of evil is broken, sinners are forgiven, outcasts are gathered into God’s friendship. The kingdom comes through the proclamation of the gospel.

Set by the lake, the Galilean ministry begins with the call of the first disciples. They follow after Jesus, transformed into fishers of people. Called in pairs, the first call is one of prompt response (immediately) and the second of complete renunciation (leaving everything).

**31 January | 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time | Mark 1:21-28 | He spoke with authority**

Four passages now follow, emphasising the authority of Jesus of teaching and exorcism, here, and followed by healings of Peter’s mother-in-law and those at evening. This gospel has two features: an admired by his listeners teaching by Jesus and an exorcism of an unclean spirit which provokes fear in the spectators. The divine authority of Jesus is made manifest in both word (teaching) and action (healing). A pattern emerges of the Spirit and Satan in conflict; hostility between the forces of evil and the forces of good found in the life of every Christian.

The public career of Jesus is now under way; his authority is evidenced in word and action, giving credit to his new teaching. This is just the beginning and yet his fame spreads quickly throughout Galilee in this first phase of his mission. But the crowds are astonished because they do not understand what is really taking place; the kingdom of God is breaking in with the power of Jesus over the demonic but the human response of people, including the disciples, has a long way to go.