

6 JANUARY 2019

Sunday Message

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 2

**FOLLOW
YOUR STAR!**
(MATT 2:1-12)

Matthew is a Jewish Christian writing for a community which included many people from a Jewish background.

So to this evangelist it is natural to show that in the person of Jesus, God's plan for human beings, as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, has been fulfilled. His audience, steeped in the traditions of their religion, would understand the background against which he is writing and the allusions he is making to their folklore and practices.

The biblical background to Matthew's presentation of the Good News is that of the Exodus, the event which defines the Jewish people and their understanding of God. The human figure dominating the narrative is Moses, the person who puts into action God's plan for the liberating of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and who brings God's Law, or Teaching, to the Israelites at Sinai. Matthew casts Jesus as a present-day Moses: his Infancy Narrative has many echoes of the story of Moses and of the Exodus experience. Hence, the tragic episode of the massacre of the male children in and around Bethlehem (for which there is no evidence outside of the account of Matthew) echoes the reaction of the Egyptian Pharaoh to a perceived threat to his throne and power.

So when we consider the exotic visitors from the East, the Magi, and the star which leads them to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem, we would do well to look for clues in the Exodus story. One possibility is the figure of Balaam, described by a Greek-speaking Jewish writer called Philo as a *magos*.

He is a person accredited with supernatural insight, who is brought by King Balak to curse the people of Israel and so bring disaster upon them. Balaam, instead, pronounces a blessing, so causes the opposite effect. He prophesies that "a star shall come forth from Jacob, and a sceptre arise out of Israel" (Num 24:17). The star in Matthew shines over the land of Israel (Jacob) and announces the birth of the King of the Jews (the sceptre). Herod intends to use the Magi to destroy Jesus, whom he regards as a threat to his tenuous claim to be a king, but they thwart his plans by not returning with the information he needs, as a result of a supernatural warning. Matthew thus sets the scene for his narrative of the ministry and passion of Jesus. Jesus is a figure like Moses, but even greater, and will fulfil God's plan for another Exodus for those who accept his message. ■

REFLECT

There have been many learned articles written about the Star of Bethlehem, its identity and the time of its appearing. However, the Gospel writers often use symbolic writing to convey their belief about the person of Jesus. Matthew, then, is drawing on stories familiar to his audience and

expects them to make the connections. Many Christians have little acquaintance with the Jewish Scriptures and so fail to appreciate the links being made. The answer to 'What was the star of Bethlehem?' is probably to be found in the Book of Numbers, rather than in astronomical speculation. ■

SAY

All nations shall worship you, Lord.

DO

Read the first two chapters of the Gospel according to Matthew. Look up the cross references to the Book of Exodus and note the connections.



LEARN

Midrash is a type of writing which takes a familiar biblical story and re-interprets it.

Some scholars regard Matthew's Infancy Narrative as a *midrash* on the story of Moses and the Exodus.

The Magi are Gentiles with knowledge from the natural sciences; they need the Jewish Scriptures to complete their search.

Matthew mentions three gifts, not three Kings.

SWINFORD MEELICK MIDFIELD
Fr Dermot Meehan Phone: 094-9251790/Urgent Calls: 087-1338200

PARISH OFFICE- OPENING HOURS: Mon, Thurs, Fri: 9.00am-2.00pm; Phone: 094 - 9253607
Email: swinews@hotmail.com **6th – 13th Jan 2019**

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Saturday 5th	6.30pm	Swinford: P.J & Kitty Moore, Carracanada
Sunday 6th	12 noon	Swinford: Martin 'Gussie' Moran, Brabazon Heights Mary & Bill McNicholas, Lisheenabrone
Monday 7th	10.00am	Swinford: Dec'd Lavin Family, Castlebawn, McDonagh Family, Faheens & Deeney Family, Donegal
Tuesday 8th	10.00am	Swinford: No Intention
Wednesday 9th	10.00am	Swinford: Dec'd Dunleavy Family, Logcurra
Thursday 10th	10.00am	Swinford: Michael & Annie Murtagh & dec'd Family, Tullinacurra
Friday 11th	10.00am	Swinford: Michael Callaghan & dec'd Family
Saturday 12th	10.00am	Swinford: John Tunney (MM), his parents Thomas & Agnes, Liseratish Tony & Kathleen Brennan, Kilbride/Kinaffe

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Saturday 12th	6.30pm	Swinford: Mary Duinegan, Park Road (1 st anniv) Michael & Kathleen Regan, Brabazon Heights & their son Michael, Kilbride
Sunday 13th	12 noon	Swinford: Michael. Nora, Richard, Luke & Phelim Durkan, Lisbawn Anne & James Rooney, Ardlee

Sunday 6th	9.00am	Meelick: Margaret Gallagher, Oldcastle (1 st anniv)
Sunday 13th	9.00am	Meelick: No Intention

Sunday 6th	10.30am	Midfield: Joe McNamera , his parents & his brother John & dec'd Family & Paddy & Mary O'Brien, Brackloon Michael Lavin & dec'd Family, Carnacul
Sunday 13th	10.30am	Midfield: Eileen & James Tierney & son-in-law Tommy Quinn Brine Connell & dec'd Family, Cashelsheenaughane

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Swinford Church: Sundays: 2pm-6pm & Thursdays 10.30am-8pm

Midfield Church: Mondays 11am-12noon

Meelick Church: Mondays 7pm-9pm

Please pray for Patrick Salmon, Derryronane; Mary Walsh, Kinaffe and John Brennan, Sheffield, England formerly of Lislackagh (husband of Maura Lanigan, Sancta Maria). May they rest in the peace of Christ.

We welcome into the Christian community

Molly Hannah Moore, Oak Drive who was baptised recently in Swinford Church.

Congratulations and every blessing to Cathy Geraghty and James Killeen who were married in Meelick Church on New Year's Eve.

Parish Pastoral Council: The January meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council will take place in the Meeting Room in the Parochial House on Monday, January 7th at 8p.m.

HomeInstead Senior Care are currently recruiting full and part-time Caregivers for the Mayo region. FETAC Level 5 certified core modules in Care Skills & Care of the Older Person commencing in-house on the 17th January. Booking is essential. Please contact Jackie on 094-9044785.

Thank You: Thank you to all who supported the Swinford Go Getters raffle/cake sale/tombola recently. We appreciate your help and all money raised will go to providing equipment and help run the Go for Life games over 2019. Next games will be on Thursday 10th January from 10.30 to 12.30 at the Cultural Centre Swinford. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Swinford Community Lotto Results for 2nd January Numbers: 03 05 12 19; €70 Local Shopping Voucher Winners; Lorna Sheedy, Galway; Yvonne Brennan, c/o Moore's; 3 Number winners: Pdraig Stenson, Culmore; Patricia Tunney, cloonlara; Pdraig Durkin Jnr, c/o Moore's; Tom Killilea, Meelick; Jackpot €8,600; Next draw on Monday 7th January.

Swinford Killasser Ladies GFC Lotto Committee would like to wish all our supporters and supporters of the Amenity Park a very happy New year. Thank you very much for your support in 2018.

Heartfulness, Relaxation and Meditation: Monday January 14th at 7pm in the Meeting Room at the Parochial House Swinford. Free and open to all over 16 years. Contact 086-0700681 if you require further information.

GAA 50/50: This week's draw was held in The Whitehouse and Shane Gallagher of Killaturley,

Swinford won €1,209. The next draw is in Melletts on Tuesday 8th January.

GAA National Club Draw Tickets are now available from club officers at €10 each with fantastic prizes to be won. Draw will take place on 6th March.

Chiropodist: Martin McNally will attend at The Gateway Hotel Swinford on Friday 11th January from 10.00am.

Meelick ICA Guild: A Happy New Year to all members of Meelick ICA Guild, present and past. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th January at 8pm at Meelick Community Centre. All welcome. Enquiries: Judith 086- 074 9103.

Swinford & District Gardening Club: Their fundraiser for the new Down Syndrome Regional Centre on the Kilkelly Road raised €2,540.00. The club would like to thank all those who supported this worthy cause.

Self Care to Wellness: Morning programme starting in Castlebar. If you have a long term health condition this programme may be of interest to you. This is a six week programme delivered in 2.5 hour weekly sessions where you will learn new skills to manage your health condition on a day to day basis. This Programme will commence on Tuesday 5th February in Castlebar Primary Care Centre from 10.30 am to 1pm. You must register in advance as places are limited. Cost of programme total is €20.00 to cover registration and manual. Please contact Jackie Lynott on 087-7185615/ 094 -9034980 or email: selfcaretowellness@mayocil.ie for more information.

Midfield Pipe Band: will be conducting Piping & Drumming Lessons for beginners or any interested parties, all ages young & old in Swinford Culture Centre on Jan 12th, Jan 26th, Feb 9th, Mar 2nd, Mar 9th, Mar 16th From 11am – 1pm. Contact Eugene on 087-6744121 or Michael on 087-6169450 for more information €40 for all 6 Lessons.

Swinford F.C: The AGM of Swinford F.C. will be held in the Gateway Hotel on Friday 11th January at 7.30pm. Happy new year to all our Players and their Families and to all our club officials and our supporters.