

Today we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany – one of three great feasts of the Church in which Jesus is revealed to the world – a manifestation of God to all people: the Baptism of the Lord and the wedding feast of Cana being the other two. . .

And yet this celebration is a bit different from those other two – in that there doesn't seem to be any dramatic event – or unmistakable action of God – such as a voice coming from the heavens or water being turned into wine. . .

In fact, in this story – Jesus isn't doing anything – he's just lying there, with Mary and Joseph to care for him – helpless, dependent, gentle, weak: just like any other newborn.

This isn't one of those Bible stories in which something obviously out-of-this-world happens. Rather, on the surface, this looks pretty much like any other family struggling to bring a child into the world in the tough circumstances and conditions of the ancient world.

How many people probably walked right past the stable without even batting an eye – without even knowing of the miracle in their midst?

How many people heard a baby crying somewhere and presumed it was just like any other baby in every way – nothing special, nothing out of the ordinary, nothing worth taking time out to investigate?

And who can blame them?? We would almost certainly have done the same things – would have probably gone about our business without ever being aware that some great action of God had and was taking place.

And when we saw these men from a far-off land – obviously not from our neck of the woods – in awe of this newborn baby – prostrating themselves and giving him precious gifts – we would have probably scratched our heads and wondered what they were up to. . .

What are they looking at? Are they seeing something that we can't see??

Sometimes I wish God would act as he did in the past. . . that he would provide us with our own incredible stories of faith – not just the stories of two thousand years ago that we tell over again – but stories arising in this very time and place.

God seems to have done so many remarkable things in the past – actions and events and miracles that included characters and situations that are unforgettable.

And regarding Epiphany in particular – why doesn't God give us our own Magi – people who go to great lengths to follow a star and help us find God? Why doesn't God do that for us like he did long ago?

But then I wonder -----who says he doesn't??

One of the great traps we can fall into is believing that God doesn't act like he used to, doesn't reveal himself to us as he did in the past. We can often feel that God was so much more connected to people long ago, so interested in their lives, their survival, their history. *God did so much more centuries ago --* or so we might think. . .

And yet the great truth of the Incarnation – is that God doesn't just pop-in once in a while, or reveal himself to us once in a while, or do something miraculous once in a while.

Rather, God came to us in the person of Jesus two thousand years ago – and NEVER LEFT! God is still Emmanuel – God is still with us – loving us, guiding us, revealing himself to us, saving us – all those same things from the past – even providing us with our own Magi. . .

Magi? In this time and place? ---Who are they? They are the men and women :

-who try to see the good in every person.

-who find hope in difficult circumstances.

-who embrace the messiness of life rather than run from it.

-who regard helping someone as a gift, not a burden.

-those who believe tomorrow can be better than today. . .

In other words, modern-day Magi are those who see as God sees – they see what God sees when God looks at the world, when God looks at creation, when God looks at you and me with love and compassion, and mercy.

The Magi teach us to see God where we least expect him. May we strive to see what they see, not only in the crib, but around every corner and in every person.

Magi – in this time and place? Maybe that's exactly who God is calling us to be.