



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

74 Grange Road, Glen Huntly VIC 3163

☎ 9401 6336

✉ glenhuntly@cam.org.au

💻 cam.org.au/glenhuntly

ABN: 70548 570 366

Homily at Mass The Epiphany of the Lord – 5 January 2020

The smell of smoke in the air is a small trouble for us compared to all that thousands of Australians are experiencing at the moment. We've seen the terrifying images on the TV and in the newspapers – impenetrable red smoke, fire ripping its way through towns, wild life and farm animals destroyed. And the human aspect – already some deaths including brave Fireys, worry on the faces of police, emergency officials and political leaders, tired volunteers and the involvement of our defence force men and women. We are also aware of fellow Australians in emergency accommodation and evacuation centres. Archbishop Comensoli invites all of us to make a donation to St Vincent de Paul – you can do this online at home today or even perhaps now on your phone.

What view of the sun and moon and stars can fellow Australians have in those parts of the country blanketed in smoke? Perhaps all they can see is the blood red face of the sun – eerie, xxx xxx. On today's feast of the Epiphany we look up and behold the bright star, new to the skies, which led the Magi or Wise Men from "the East" to the town of Bethlehem, where they knelt before the Lord of the Heavens seated on Mary's lap.

The Greek word 'Magi' gives us our English word 'magic'. But these men were not magicians, pulling rabbits out of hats, but it seems they were more likely Persian priests – experts in religion, philosophy, men who sought knowledge, wisdom "science" in the classical sense. They were familiar with the hopes of the Jewish People. They also looked to the skies fascinated by astronomy as well as astrology. If they searched for wisdom, they also searched for the source of wisdom, the reason for hope, the creator of all things, the meaning of life. They couldn't find this in Herod's Palace in Jerusalem. They did find it – in the person of Jesus Christ – in a simple house in Bethlehem.

We see the wise men in the manger scene today, presenting their splendid gifts: gold, incense and myrrh. Rich gifts with reach meaning: gold honours Christ our King and Lord; incense speaks of his divinity – Jesus Christ is God to whom we offer praise, worship, adoration, thanksgiving. And he is born, Mary's Son, to be our Saviour – to rescue us from sin and death, to gain us Heaven by his death on the Cross. Our Lord's friend Nicodemus and the holy women brought perfumed myrrh and spices to prepare Our Lord's body for burial.

The joyful season of Christmas brings us to the church as we celebrate Christ's birth, with poor shepherds and choirs of angels. Last weekend we reflected on the family life we share with the Holy Family – Joseph a faithful husband and hard worker; Mary, the Mother of God: holy, prayerful, contemplative; and at the heart of their family life, Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary. And today, we follow in the footsteps of the Magi – not Jews but Gentiles – the first of a great procession that includes you and me, our forbearers and our children – the whole human family. Jesus Christ shares our human flesh, our human experience, our human lot.

Australians finding shelter in remote towns, seeing their homes destroyed and losing everything that's precious to them – Jesus, Mary and Joseph also experienced life as refugees, as they sought shelter in far away Egypt. The Christmas Season is not without loss, tragedy and sadness when we remember the deaths of small children, the Holy Innocents. All of these we bring in our minds and hearts, our prayer and our cries to Heaven for help and mercy today and every Sunday.