

Have you ever had a child come up to you, drag you by the arm to something they just cannot wait to show you? Or perhaps a gift that they are getting you for birthday or Christmas and they blurt it out before you can open it or sometimes even days before the holiday? There is something exciting about gifts. I know that in this holiday season, I've found some things that I just cannot wait for people to open and enjoy. The gifts that I have most enjoyed to give or receive have always been gifts with great thought. The handprint ornament, something made from a memory.

This past year has been one for the record books. A global pandemic, hurricane season that went into the Greek alphabet, toilet paper shortages and lots of people learned to do things that were common place generations ago. This last week, I've spent time praying and thinking about where we have been and where we are going. It's been a tough year. And perhaps more tears and anger than we wanted. And yet this past year has helped us see – perhaps like the wise men.

We don't really know much about these wise men. We need to throw out most of what we think we know. We don't know where they're from. We don't know their names. We don't even know how many were there. When we look at all the nativity scenes (which many have packed away because Christmas ended more than a week ago according to many) we see 3 wise men who are giving gifts. Our Gospel reading today tells us more than there were gifts. These men believed so much in the promises of God, that there would be a child, whose birth was foretold. We heard those promises of the Messiah who would be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. They not only heard it but they were willing to uproot their lives and travel to a foreign land to pay homage

to the new king. Scholars believe it took them years to get here to see Jesus. We know this from context clues. King Herod asked the wise men when the star appeared and in verse 16, which we did not read, Herod sent for all of the children 2 and under to be killed in Bethlehem.

The wise men saw the star, the light that it shined in the world, was bright enough to lead them from home, from comfort, from all that they knew to a king that they did not know. The light that shines in the world was bright enough to lead these men to recognize and honor the newborn king. Throughout Advent we looked at the light that was promised through the prophet Isaiah and the explanation of the light from the Gospel of John. The light that entered earth that holy night, was not encapsulated just in the child, but that the light from the heavens lead those too.

The beauty of Christmas, the lights that twinkle on trees and in neighborhoods are a reminder that the star light that brought the wise men to bring gifts to the king and still guiding us today. As we begin to pack away Christmas until next December, may we continue to follow the light. May we believe that Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again. In the weeks to come we must not forget that the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it. In the weeks to come may we learn to reorder our lives in the star light. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen