

# St. Louis Catholic Church

53 Allen Street East, Waterloo ON N2J 1J3 Tel: 519-743-4101

Email: [stlouiswaterloo@hamiltondiocese.com](mailto:stlouiswaterloo@hamiltondiocese.com) Web site: [www.saintlouisparish.ca](http://www.saintlouisparish.ca)

Served by the Congregation of the Resurrection since 1890.

**Pastor:** Father Phil Reilly, C.R. [preilly@hamiltondiocese.com](mailto:preilly@hamiltondiocese.com)

**Parish Secretary:** Anna Malton [stlouiswaterloo@hamiltondiocese.com](mailto:stlouiswaterloo@hamiltondiocese.com)

**Coordinator of Youth and Children's Ministries:** Kelly Krause [kkrause@hamiltondiocese.com](mailto:kkrause@hamiltondiocese.com)

**Custodian:** Doug Lichty



*We saw his star in the East  
and have come to worship Him*

# THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

**MASS INTENTIONS**  
Celebrated privately by Fr. Phil

**Monday, January 4 – No Mass**

**Tuesday, January 5**

9:00 AM In Thanksgiving for Graces Received – Boquiren & Estrada Families

**Wednesday, January 6**

9:00 AM † Bill Lavigne – Stirling Investment Club

**Thursday, January 7 – St. André Bessette, Religious**

9:00 AM † John Moser – Moser Family

**Friday, January 8**

9:00 AM † Bill Lavigne – Cecilia Beechey

**Saturday, January 9**

**Vigil of the Baptism of the Lord**

5:00 PM † Catherine Ford – Pat & Joan Forde

† Kitty Forde – Pat & Joan Forde

† Walter & Kaye Hartman – Children

**Sunday, January 10 – The Baptism of the Lord**

9:30 AM † Joe Lewicki – Sally & Brendan Sheridan

† Paul Moser – Moser Family

† Bill Lavigne – Stirling Investment Club

† Filomena Salvatore – Elizabeth Schwarz

11:30 AM People of St. Louis Parish

## Reflections on the Gospel reading: Matthew 2: 1-12:

It is important to remember the contents of chapter 1 of Matthew in order to situate and interpret the first twelve verses of this second chapter. Chapter 1 opens with the detailed genealogy of Jesus and proceeds to foretell the Lord's birth through the Angel speaking to Joseph in a dream. In other words, in this rendition of Jesus' birth, there is no manger and no shepherds, no dramatic infancy narrative. Instead, Matthew is primarily interested in establishing that Jesus is born in the line of David; he is not an outsider but is thoroughly Jewish. This is important to Matthew because he writes in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction (AD 70) with the objective to convince Jews and Jewish Christians that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law.

Chapter 2 of Matthew's Gospel opens with a question spoken by foreigners (i.e. non-Jews): "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?" It is significant that the wise men are from the far east (to be read as "the ends of the earth"). King Herod, who was king of Judea, is greatly troubled by this and plots the demise of the rival king. Matthew's objective here is to highlight, from the outset the Messiah's birth, the rejection by His own that He will experience during His lifetime. In Matthew's Gospel, the way in which Jesus preaches the fulfillment of the law will continually be viewed as a threat to continuity. For example, as He will say in chapter 5: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Again, the Gospel is constructed so that we are to see from His very birth that Jesus' mission will be frustrated and even thwarted by those within His own family. Thus, it is the Gentiles from the far east who pay homage to the baby king. Herod's plan of destruction is overturned when a dream instructs the wise men to return home. Far removed from Bethlehem of Judea, these seekers surely continued to testify to God's wondrous deeds. *From the Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word*

**Beginning on December 26, 2020, for at least 28 days, until the lockdown period is over, there will be no public Masses celebrated at St. Louis Church.**



**Exactly who were these Three Kings, who traveled from the East to Judea to worship before the Christ Child? Where they really monarchs? St. Matthew makes no reference to the fact that they might have been rulers. He simply calls them "magi" from the East.**

The Greek word *magos* appears in the New Testament just five times and had four different meanings: first, it is the name for a member of the Persian sacerdotal caste, or the Magi; secondly, it referred to one who was learned in esoteric or cult practices; thirdly, it was the name for a sorcerer; and fourth - more derogatorily, the term stood for a trickster, astrologer, or interpreter of dreams. Since the Wise Men, or Magi, observed the star in the sky they were familiar with astrology. This is by no means unusual. Astral cults played a significant role in the lives of ancient religious communities. Individuals saw the sun, moon, stars, and planets as representations of a separate, heavenly, and mysterious world.

In the ancient world there was one race that openly mistrusted astrological practices, deeming them idolatrous. The Israelites, received a command from God to avoid soothsayers, summoners of spirits, and astrologers. Only God could give signs, through the words of His prophets. As the prophet Daniel said to King Nebuchadnezzar "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to king the mystery which the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (Dan 2:27).

In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that the arrival the Magi in Judea, along with the message that they followed a star heralding the birth of the Messiah, caused some shock in Jerusalem. While the prophets had foretold the Messiah's coming about this time, no one from among the Jews had taken to observing the sky for any sort of sign.

Another skill attributed to magi was the ability to interpret dreams. In many countries, this skill was the preserve of the priesthood.



In Egypt, papyrus "dream books" were produced, offering interpretation of various subconscious desires experienced during sleep. In Rome there was even an obligation to discuss one's dreams in public when they concerned some aspect of the state or empire.

Dreams were, therefore, certainly not regarded as something insignificant or trivial by inhabitants of the ancient Eastern world. They crop up quite often in the Bible, usually as means of transmitting messages from God. Not everyone was endowed with the gift of

interpreting these symbolic messages. Those who had this gift were held in great esteem by Jews and Gentiles (Joseph at Pharaoh's court, or Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's Dream).

**How many individuals had the same dream that night? A couple? Several? A few dozen?** Matthew's Gospel does not provide specific number. In the early centuries of Christianity, particularly among the Syrians and Armenians, it was surmised that there may have been twelve Magi - a reference to the twelve tribes of Israel. The symbolic implication was that God's divine favour would pass from the Jews to a Church composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Second- and third-century frescos in the Roman catacombs variously depict two, four, or six Magi. To this day, the Coptic Church in Egypt holds that as many as sixty Wise Men came to Judea - a veritable entourage.

In the Western world, the most popular number finds its beginnings in the writings of one of the Church Fathers, Origen: "*There were three magi, since three gifts were offered: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*" This is the number of figures depicted in the famous sixth-century mosaic found in the New Basilica of St. Apollinaris in Ravenna, Italy (top of left page).

We don't actually know what the Magi were called. The traditional names of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar have their origins in the sixth century. Each name is derived from a word meaning "king": Caspar derives from the Latin *caesar*, and shares an etymological root with the German *kaiser*; Melchior is derived from the Hebrew *melech*; while Balthasar stems from the Greek *basileus*.

These kingly appellations appeared in large part due to Christian teaching, which in the sixth century began to reconstruct the Magi as monarchs. It is quite likely that this occurred as a result of the theological interpretations of Psalm 72, which contains the following messianic prophecy: "*May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him*" (10-11). The idea that the Wise Men from the East were kings has its basis in this text. In addition, they symbolized the extent of the known world: Tarshish was likely a Phoenician colony that some scholars place in southern Spain. Sheba is thought to have spanned modern-day Ethiopia and Yemen.

In time, Christian imagination began adding other biographical details. Melchior was said to be about sixty years old, Balthazar about forty, and Caspar about twenty. In this way, they could be seen to represent all generations, from old to young.

We do not know what happened to the Kings after they had paid their respects to the Christ Child. Matthew wrote only that they returned to their own country. In time, however, stories began circulating that they were baptized by one of the Apostles, went on to become bishops, and eventually became martyrs. In his "*Description of the World*", the 13<sup>th</sup> century Venetian traveler Marco Polo wrote: "*In Persia is the city of Saba, from which the Three Magi set out when they went to pay homage to Jesus Christ... In this city they are buried, in three very large and beautify monuments.*" The French missionary Bl. Odoric of Pordenone made the same observation in 1320.

Today the Three Magi are venerated as the patron saints of travelers, pilgrims, merchants, innkeepers and furriers. Pope Benedict XVI assessed their significance "*We could well say that they represent the religions moving toward Christ, as well as the self-transcendence of science to Him. In a way they are the successors of Abraham, who set off on a journey in response to God's call. In another way they are the successors of Socrates and his habit of questioning above and beyond conventional religion toward the higher truth. In this sense, these figures are forerunners, preparers of the way, seekers after truth, such as we find in every age.*"

(Excerpts from "Three Kings, Ten Mysteries" by Grzegorz Gorny, Ignatius Press)

As the Christmas decorations come down some people write the following on their front doors with a chalk that was blessed for the occasion on the feast of the Epiphany.



20 \* C † M † B † 21

A key to the code:

— The '\*' symbolizes the star that led the wise men to Jesus.

— The letters 'C', 'M', and 'B' signify the Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They are also the first three letters of the Latin phrase 'CHRISTUS MANSIONEM BENEDICAT' which means 'May Christ Bless the house'.

— The three crosses '†' signify the Holy Trinity made known to us through the Incarnation.

— Encompassing them all is the year we have just entered into: '2021'. It is a nice devotion for Epiphany – great for families – and is an active reminder for us through the year of the wonder of Christmas.

(Pieces of the blessed chalk will be available this year at the entrance to the Rectory.)



**First Communion Preparation classes** - If you have a child in Gr. 2 and would like them to receive their Sacrament of First Communion here at St. Louis parish please register for our classes. They will begin Tuesday,

January 26<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-7pm. It will have to be determined in the New Year whether we will be able to meet face to face or if the classes will be online. The First Communion will take place on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to register for this class please contact Kelly Krause at the parish office.

**Sunday School & Liturgy of the Word** will resume (on-line) January 10<sup>th</sup>. Would like to get involved? Email Kelly ([kkrause@hamiltondiocese.com](mailto:kkrause@hamiltondiocese.com)) to get the link to our virtual Sunday school. Join us to learn more about your faith!



**St. Louis Youth Group** (Gr. 6 – 12) will resume the on-line twice a month meetings on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Contact Kelly for more information.



The Son of God was first manifested to the world through the visit of the magi. Today, God's Son is brought into the world and is present to the world through His Church. If God is calling you, to the priesthood, contact Fr. Michael King, Vocation Director, Diocese of Hamilton [vocations@hamiltondiocese.com](mailto:vocations@hamiltondiocese.com), 905-528-7988, or Fr. Toby Collins, CR, Vocation Director, at [crvocations@gmail.com](mailto:crvocations@gmail.com), or Carmel of St. Joseph in St. Agatha at 519-884-6700.



Fish Fry at Waterloo K of C on Fridays will restart again on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Wednesday Spaghetti Dinner Program at Waterloo K of C. will resume on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Office is closed till Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Emails are checked through the week.**

**The bulletins are posted on-line only.**

*Last weeks' donations - Thank you!*

Date	Sunday	Mainten	Christmas	Loose	Pre-Author.
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