Some thoughts on Epiphany 2020:

In the +Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

We’ve had Christmas, and all the joy that comes with it, and the gifts and the love and family time and the like. And now we’re coming into a season that really doesn’t get a lot of attention cos of other events and feast days such as Our Lord’s Baptism, which we celebrate next week.

Epiphany is the season, in which we celebrate " the showing forth of our Lord Jesus as a baby to the Wise Men ... or Magi. But what does this actually mean.

After Easter, Epiphany is the second oldest season in the Christian Church year. The Greek word Epiphany can be translated as "the showing forth." So Epiphany is the day which leads to the actual season, in which we celebrate the showing forth of our Lord Jesus as a baby to the Wise Men ... also known as the Magi.

So today we celebrate the first Sunday of the Season of Epiphany and we do so with the gladness of heart because as with so many secrets which surround us today ... He has "shown, manifest, revealed himself to us" ... and these are becoming revealed to us, and will unfold over time. Most importantly, we start unfolding them all now ... which brings us to the second aspect of Epiphany.

Cos it also means appearing, bringing something into the light, making something visible that which was once unseen and hidden. So in a planning sense, the season of Epiphany is also about light: Indeed, this is actually what the story of the Magi is about.

And our scripture of Isaiah guides us in verse 1"... Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

So the season of Epiphany is also about the coming of the true Light into the darkness of this world and it’s why we actually should keep our Christmas lights up until January 6th, the actual day of Epiphany, as it concludes the twelve days of Christmas.

This year, we did just that, and we had lots of folk asking why we were still doing Christmas fairy lights and icicles and the like for twelve days, when Santa had already been and gone. So this gave us an extra opportunity to unfold what Christmas and the Magi are really about.

And who is the one true light in our lives but Jesus ... the Christ. Scripture tells us that "Christ Jesus is the Light of the world, He is the Light which no darkness can overcome."

But as I've said so often, one has to read the Biblical stories with a view to the underlying. The Jews always talked in stories ... still do ... and we always have to remember who it was who wrote the Bible. Cos there was not a Christian scholar or scribe in sight ... only Jews. And they wrote allegorically.

So let's revisit the Gospel of today. Let's read from the Good News Bible, Catholic edition: Matthew 2, verse 1 onwards:

*"Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem, in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterwards, some men who studied the stars came from the East, to Jerusalem, and asked where is the baby, born to be king of the Jews ? We saw His star when it came up in the East, and we have come to worship him."*

Remember just before Christmas, I commented on the alignment of Jupiter and Saturn ? This is quite possibly the star that they Magi saw … the problem being tho that they were in the east, and the star … the two planets seen as one … is only visible in the west, about an hour after sunset. Again … does it matter ?

So what's the deal with the Wise Men ... the Magi ... coming from the East ? Remember .... the Jews talk in stories. They talk, they write ... allegorically.

So ... why the East ? The Sun rises in the East. So that's where the light comes from !

*I am the Light of the World*, the Baby Jesus would later say. This is why in true Catholic traditional churches, the church is aligned to face the East, and the priest celebrates in ad populum mode ... not contra, as I am now ... facing the people.

Why ? Cos as the substitute for the Christ, the priest is leading them into the East. Leading them into the light.

Did the Magi ... the three wise men ... actually exist ? To me, it really doesn't matter. Indeed, most of the Bible doesn't really matter in an historical sense.

The truth of the Bible lies not in its written word exactly as written ... but in its underlying truths, and Epiphany is a most important Season for exactly this reason ... cos it's not about three guys and Herod and gold, frankincense and myrrh ... but about the Christ ... the eternal Cosmic spirit ... being revealed to us, and leading us into the light.

So while Epiphany is a season of the Christian faith structure, unlike the others such as Easter, it’s actually not so much a season about Jesus the Christ … rather, it’s about us. This is our epiphany … When WE … have that light-bulb moment.

As we say in our final prayer … when we see HIS star shine forth. And I think we can leave it there.

And now to +God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be ascribed all honour, might majesty power and dominion, now henceforth and forever more. Amen