

**Thought for the week**  
**6<sup>th</sup> January 2019**  
**Feast of the Epiphany**

Now, after the busy-ness of Christmas and new year festivities, we may feel some sense of anti-climax at the beginning of the long journey to spring. Yet just as we are putting the decorations away and settling back into routine, the Church gives us the great feast of the Epiphany, a moment of contemplation, when our Orthodox sisters and brothers celebrate Christmas, and God reveals to the Gentiles that God in Jesus is here for all of us.

The high emotions surrounding the birth of Jesus – the drama of a birth in difficult circumstances, the fearful response of the shepherds to the message of the angels, the singing of the heavenly host – give way to a moment of quiet. It is a moment for us to ask: Who is this child for me?

The image of the journey – so powerfully and imaginatively described in T S Eliot's poem 'The journey of the Magi' – can be for each of us an image of our own faith journey. Sometimes the road seems to be full of unexpected twists and turns, potholes and cliff edges, and we may have experienced times of darkness, when we have had to keep going out of sheer faith. There will also have been moments of peace, when the journey seems straightforward and the light draws us on even though we may not really know where it is leading us. The wise men had little idea where the star they were following might take them (and they certainly had some tricky moments on the way), but they sensed that the journey would be worthwhile, for all its undoubted hardships. And so it turned out. They eventually reached the house where the Holy Family was staying, and recognising that they were in the presence of God made manifest in Jesus, they fell to their knees in homage.

This was a life-changing event: nothing would ever be the same again, and they returned home by a different way.

The threshold of the new year is a good moment to reflect on our own journey: How have I got to where I am in my faith journey, and where am I being led? Have I had such a life-changing event? Am I willing to follow the star in faith, even if I don't know exactly where I'll end up? Am I prepared to allow God to lead me on a new and unexpected path?

The year ahead will inevitably bring joys and sorrows, hope and disappointment. As we set out on our journey through 2019, let us seek some stillness and find time to spend in contemplation, reverence and awe.

Cecilia