

Father Bernie Lindley

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Church

This is Father Bernie Lindley from St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, for Voices.

Last Saturday was the Feast Day of the Epiphany. The Epiphany is the day that the Church celebrates the wise men visiting the Christ child. Church tradition has decided that there were three wise men, although the account of the event in the Gospel according to Matthew doesn't specify how many there were. Because there were three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, Christians have decided that it would be appropriate for there to be one wise man for each gift.

The wise men were probably from ancient Persia and studied the stars, looking for signs of God's divine revelation. When they spotted what they interpreted to be a sign that a mighty Hebrew king had been born, they set off to pay respect by bringing gifts. The gold, of course was necessary for the Holy Family to escape to Egypt and avoid being murdered by Herod, the current Jewish king, who hoped to prevent the loss of his kingship. The frankincense was valued for its sweet smelling fragrance when burned while worshipping God. And the myrrh was a perfume that also had a spiritual significance.

The wise men provided Jesus' parents with the things they needed to stay safe while in exile in a foreign land and still be able to worship God in accordance with their traditions. The wise men gave the Christ child what he needed at that point in his incarnation. At this point, today, in the present age, Jesus is in heaven and has no use for material things. So, if we were to follow the lead of the wise men and offer a gift to Jesus, what would we offer?

The only possible answer that we can give is to give of ourselves—the only thing we can offer is to dedicate our lives to serving Jesus by serving all the people that Jesus loves and cares about.