



Not from the Pulpit: Fr Andrew Bullen SJ

Matthew's gospel gives us the core story of some wise men coming from the east seeking the infant King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-12). As verse eleven tells us, they bring three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Later tradition gives us *three* wise men (maybe because how do you paint 'some'? and you have to paint three gifts); it turns them into kings, associates them with the three ages of man, even with three different races, and gives them names (Balthazar, Melchior and Caspar).

Our imagination of the scene has been vividly shaped by the long history of Christian art. Occasionally a poem happens too, this one imagining an angel whispering in a dream to the youngest and black one, the one least likely to be listened to.

Wisdom

Caspar, Caspar, do not be afraid
of me, of yourself, and even of Herod.
Do not fear that Melchior and Balthazar
will doubt your story, or be jealous
that I came to you alone.
If they claim that you are young,
or black, or dream too much,
admit it.

Make them remember
how they felt when Herod smiled.
You all trusted his welcome.

Notice how you shudder now
at his innocent request.

The child needs no other homage
than that of the riff-raff shepherds,
yourselves with your silly gifts,
the heavens singing, or your shifting star,
the warm breath of ox and ass,
Joseph's vigilance and the arms of Mary.

You cannot prevent the slaughter.
Arise, and disobey the king.



The Adoration of the Magi – Tapestry designed by Edward Burne-Jones 1904

Thank you

A heartfelt thank you and blessing to all our Parish volunteers who assisted with the Christmas liturgies and also with Fr Tony's Christmas Day Luncheon. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Andrew Bullen SJ

