



It seems remarkable that it's over! After all, Advent Sunday was only the week before last, wasn't it, and Christmas Day was just last week! And of course we have been singing Christmas

songs for the last six months, or so it seems! So may I now ask the question, 'Have you switched off yet?' And I don't just mean the Christmas tree lights, or the cards! Is the house back to normal? So that we can all say, 'Well, it's over for another year!' But just hang on a moment, perhaps it is that it isn't over at all.

Today is actually the end of the Christmas season, Epiphany, the arrival of the Magi at Bethlehem as you will see in our Crib. They had travelled from the East following what looked like a new star, and having consulted King Herod in Jerusalem, travelled a few miles more to Bethlehem and, 'going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling on

their knees they did him homage' ... and ... 'they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.' The familiar account retold through the centuries. And so today, Christmas is properly over and we can get back to our old lives and old tasks and begin saving all over again for next year; there is even an advert on TV for a 2022 Christmas Savings Club! But I have to ask myself and all of us here; can we really get back to our old lives and old tasks? Isn't it the case that through the Twelve days of the Christmas season something truly remarkable has happened that will not allow us simply to return to the old ways?

In the book of Deuteronomy we can read these words: 'When the Most High gave the nations their heritage and disposed men according to his plan, in fixing the boundaries of the nations he thought first of Israel's sons.' Israel, the Jewish people, were the ones whom God Most High had chosen to be his Holy People and so God protected Israel, corrected Israel, punished Israel and when God decided to 'leap down from his

Royal Throne' and become human in Jesus he did so in the heart of Israel, for Israel, to recall Israel to his vocation to live in unity with God Most High cleansed of all sin in the rituals of the Temple, and then to show forth God Most High to all humankind. Yet at Epiphany, God Most High has made himself manifest to the whole of humankind and not just Israel through the Adoration of the Magi, who of course, were not part of Israel, for like us they were gentiles. So at the very start of His earthly ministry Jesus was the Saviour of all humankind; Gentiles as well as Jews. We have been called out of darkness into a wonderful new light; we have been united personally with God Most High through Jesus; so we have been enabled to enjoy in Jesus nothing less than the life of God Most High Himself. This is why I ask of myself and all of us can we simply return to the old ways as all the decorations are put away? The answer, surely, must be NO. We have been enabled to enjoy in Jesus nothing less than the life of God Most High himself. Therefore, we live in a new light that chases

away darkness, and in that new light is where we have to live. In a very real sense Christmas never ends for us. The Child of Bethlehem, adored by Angels, Shepherds and now Magi must always and everywhere be a living light in our lives, our personal lives and our collective life as the Church, the renewed Israel. And that light must shine in our lives so that all of humankind may know and share in the life of God Most High Himself that we know and share in today through the Adoration of the Magi.

Twelfth Night has come and so the cards and the Christmass lights have been taken down. Yet for us the True Light who is Christ will never come and then go. Jesus remains for all time. Love Him, Worship Him, Be Him in your life so that all humankind may know Him. For we as His followers can never switch off our love and devotion as if that were simply an artificial thing, because it is the real thing, real, never ending life, that all are invited to share, and that we are commissioned in baptism and confirmation to show forth in the world.