

# EPIPHANY

**JANUARY 6<sup>th</sup>**



On January 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrate Epiphany – the showing forth of the incarnate Christ to the wider world. wise men, who came from far away, following a star, and bearing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Their visit has always been popular with artists and here we see versions by the

Italian Giotto, the Netherlander Bosch and the Spaniard Mantegna.



In all three, Mary holds the baby Jesus forward, presenting him to the magi, who respond with worship and adoration. Bosch zooms away from the scene showing, like that other Flemish master Breughel, an important event as just a detail in a vast landscape. Mantegna, in contrast, draws right into the scene, showing the intimacy of the moment, and allowing him to show the facial expressions in fine detail.

We can all learn much from contemplating these pictures and thinking about the wise men and their journey. We can learn from their journey: they had travelled for a long time, knowing neither their destination, nor what they would find there, but always kept going by faith that they would find their King, and always guided by God, following the star. We can learn from their reaction: they found the child not in the splendid palace they expected, but in a stable, lying in a manger. None the less, they recognised their God, and worshipped. And we can learn from the baby – God appearing in vulnerability, not in power; with us



and one of us – our Emmanuel.