

# *In the beginning was the Word...*

*An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney*



## Epiphany

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2024



*Epiphany by Fernando Gallego (c. 1480-1490, Oil and gold leaf on wood) Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*

### Antiphon for Epiphany

*O First of All, the source of all that is,  
Fountain of all creation in a manger  
In whose name sick are healed, poor sheltered, hungry fed,  
Come, King of Righteousness, receive our tribute too.*

### Scripture: Psalm 72

Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
the royal son with your righteousness.  
<sup>2</sup> May he judge your people in righteousness,  
your afflicted ones with justice.  
<sup>3</sup> May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,  
the hills the fruit of righteousness.  
<sup>4</sup> May he defend the afflicted among the people  
and save the children of the needy;  
may he crush the oppressor.

- <sup>12</sup> For he will deliver the needy who cry out,  
the afflicted who have no one to help.  
<sup>13</sup> He will take pity on the weak and the needy  
and save the needy from death.  
<sup>14</sup> He will rescue them from oppression and violence,  
for precious is their blood in his sight.

*To reflect*

One definition of epiphany in the Cambridge English Dictionary is, “a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand or suddenly become conscious of something.”

I have always thought of Epiphany as the coming of the Kings, the recognition of the kingship of Jesus as portrayed in Nativity plays almost everywhere. But, of course, Matthew does not mention royalty, but wisdom and the picture above represents this.

My moment of epiphany came when I realised how much more was packed into this story and how pertinent it is for today. Jesus was born in uncertain times of occupation by a foreign country with different rules and religion. He brought the Good News to all including those on the edge of society with the instruction to love others regardless of race or creed. In our uncertain present time we need the injunction to love each other, even our enemies, with mercy, pity, peace and Love.

*The Divine Image by William Blake*

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
All pray in their distress;  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
Is God, our father dear,  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,  
Pity a human face,  
And Love, the human form divine,  
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,  
That prays in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine,  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,  
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;  
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell  
There God is dwelling too.

*As selected by Malcolm Guite from Waiting on the Word: A Poem a day for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany (Canterbury Press 2015)*

*Antiphon for Epiphany*

*O First of All, the source of all that is,  
Fountain of all creation in a manger  
In whose name sick are healed, poor sheltered, hungry fed,  
Come, King of Righteousness, receive our tribute too.*

*...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*