

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

In the Church's calendar the Christmas season begins on Christmas Day and continues until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord which usually takes the place of the 1st Ordinary Sunday of the Year.

However, because Christmas Day fell on a Monday in 2017, the Christmas season concludes with today's feast of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Traditionally the Epiphany is celebrated on 6th January, the twelfth day of Christmas. In many countries, including Australia, the feast is transferred to the Sunday closest to 6th January. This year we celebrate the Epiphany on 7th January.

The word ***Epiphany*** comes from the Greek word for "manifestation". In the western Church, the feast became associated with the manifestation of Jesus to the non-Jewish peoples through the visit of the Magi. Each year we read the account of the coming of the Magi that we find only in Matthew's Gospel (Mt 2:2-12).

Today's feast is a call to all Christians to give witness to the message of the Gospel in the world.

It is also a reminder that the Magi or wise men from the East were probably from Persia, modern Iraq. As Jesus came to reveal God's love for all peoples so we too are called to bring a message of peace and goodwill to all the nations. For us that is an invitation to work with men and women of all races, religions and cultures to bring peace to the world. We pray especially for peace in Iraq and Syria.