

Your Rôle ...

... is to be the star

A reflection for Epiphany, 5th January 2025 – by the Curate, the Revd Charlie Shefford, in Beverley Minster.

Matthew 2:1-12

In the Minster this advent, I noticed for the first time the star which hangs from the ceiling above the knave and was told (and I'm not sure if I'm sharing company secrets here) that the star was actually a biscuit tin with some lights in it. I think nothing could better reflect God's own repurposing and transformational creative process and power than turning a biscuit tin into the star of Bethlehem. Taking something ordinary and common and transforming it into something which directs and guides us to the glory of God. If God can transform something that's everyday and numerous as a star to guide us to himself, how much more can he transform you; you who are carefully and wonderfully made. In the story of the Magi, our rôle is to be the star: the star gains the Magi's attention; the star points towards Bethlehem, even when the Magi ignore it and journey to Jerusalem; the star hovers over the manger.

It may be that you are trying to get your friends, your children, your grandchildren to more seriously consider what it means to have faith in Christ. Or maybe you are trying to bring about justice in an unjust situation. Or maybe you are supporting someone through a difficult time. In all of this, your rôle is to be the star....

- ★ your rôle is to live your life in such a way that people become interested, not so much in you, as in the joyful and loving reality to which your life is pointing;
- ★ your rôle is to keep pointing to that joyful, loving reality, even when those whose attention you want to direct aren't interested;
- ★ your rôle is to still be pointing to that joyful reality when the time comes, when those whose hearts are restless begin to wonder again about where that joyful reality is to be found;
- ★ your rôle is not to be Jesus, the one to whom everyone looks and who changes everything;
- ★ your rôle is not to be Herod, threatened by and scared of any change that might draw you away from the centre of the story;
- ★ your rôle is not even to be the Magi, pursuing truth in the outer reaches of God's ways...
- ★ your rôle is to shine the light on the transforming reality of Jesus Christ.

Whether people notice that shining light is not necessarily something you need to concern yourself with. Your rôle is to make sure that the light is shining - everything you do, think, and speak is pointing to that transforming power and the humility of the manger.

Your rôle is to be the star.

Reading Text

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." ' ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.