

ST PATRICK'S, ST JOHN VIANNEY'S, STELLA MARIS & ST JOSEPH'S

Partnered Parishes of Mentone-Parkdale and Ricketts Point (Beaumaris & Black Rock)

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD - 4th January 2026

St Patrick's, 10 Rogers St, Mentone

St John Vianney's, Cnr Warren Rd & Brisbane Tce, Parkdale

Stella Maris, 2 Charlotte Rd, Beaumaris

St Joseph's, 542 Balcombe Rd, Black Rock

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil: 6:00pm (Mentone)

Sunday: 8:00am (Black Rock)

Sunday: 9:00am (Parkdale)

Sunday: 10:30am (Beaumaris)

Sunday: 11:00am (Mentone)

Sunday: 5:00pm (Mentone)



The word 'Epiphany' comes from the Greek for 'showing', 'appearance', 'manifestation': we celebrate Christ being revealed to all the nations, including the gentiles - represented by the Magi, the wise men.

Who were the Magi?

Apart from the brief account in St Matthew's Gospel, we know little for certain about the Magi. **A common theory is that they were of the Persian priestly caste, following Zoroastrianism, Persia's ancient religion, and engaged in a mixture of mystical astrology and scientific astronomy** (pursuits not clearly separated till much later). Jewish prophecies may have been known to them from eastern Jewish communities. In Jesus' time, the Parthian Empire (247 BC–AD 224) ruled Persia, as well as Mesopotamia (Iraq).

The Greek term Matthew uses for the wise men is *magoi*, that we put in English as 'magi'; its source seems to be the old Iranian language, Avesta, used in the Zoroastrian scriptures of that name. We know astrology to be a sin of superstition (not to mention devoid of scientific validity); but God made use, not only of the Magi's search for wisdom, but even of the likely negative element in their ideas - drawing good from evil, purifying their hearts and rewarding their sincere intentions.

The journey from Persia probably would not have gone directly across the deserts in modern-day western Iraq and eastern Jordan, but would have swung north up the Euphrates valley, through the area of the current Iraq-

Syria border, then south to Damascus and Jerusalem. It would have taken at least three months, maybe longer.

Another possibility is that the Magi were from Raqmu (Greek: Petra), in the south of modern-day Jordan, the city carved in the rock, capital of the wealthy Nabataean kingdom (4th cent. BC - AD 106) that flourished at this time.



(King Herod's mother was a Nabataean princess, and he seems to have spent some of his boyhood in Petra.)

From a Judean viewpoint, this area would often be what was referred to by the term 'the East', used by St Matthew to indicate the origin of the Magi (*Mt* 2:1). Part of Petra's trading wealth derived from its control of a key junction on the 'Incense Route' on which frankincense, myrrh, and other goods were brought up from the southern Arabian peninsula.



The Star of Bethlehem

The Gospel does not say if the 'Star of Bethlehem' was a miraculous light specially created by God, or a natural event (also caused by God - like everything in the universe - and wondrously planned for this very purpose).

Astronomical programs do confirm that on 17 June, 2 BC, there occurred in the western sky an extraordinarily close and bright conjunction of the two brightest planets, Venus and Jupiter, appearing as if a single star. In context of the Magi's astrological beliefs, this may be what sparked their journey. And data on Jupiter's changing position at certain times in December of 2 BC - as viewed from Earth and relative to the curve of the old Jerusalem-Bethlehem road - harmonise amazingly with Matthew's text, carefully read. So Jupiter is one persuasive candidate for the 'Star'; and God could well have also added miraculous elements.

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Justin Ford **Assistant Priest:** Rev Fr Joseph Nguyen

Presbytery: 10 Rogers St, Mentone 3194 **Office:** 3 Mitchell St, Mentone 3194 **Office hours:** 9am-5pm, Monday - Thursday.

Phone: 9583 2103 **Email:** mentoneparkdaleeast@cam.org.au **Website:** www.sspjv.org

WEEKDAY MASSES

Mon 5 Jan	11:00am (<i>Mentone</i>)
Tue 6 Jan	9:15am (<i>Mentone</i>)
Wed 7 Jan	9:15am (<i>Mentone & Black Rock</i>)
Thu 8 Jan	9:15 (<i>Mentone & Beaumaris</i>)
Fri 9 Jan	9:15am (<i>Mentone & Black Rock</i>)
Sat 10 Jan	9:15am (<i>Mentone & Beaumaris</i>)

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

at **St Patrick's Mentone**: over the summer holidays there is now a break in Friday Exposition. Exposition will resume at St Patrick's, 6th February 2026.

Exposition at Stella Maris Beaumaris continues over the summer holidays every Saturday 9:45-10:15am.

RECONCILIATION / CONFESSION

Wednesdays following 9:15am Mass (*Mentone*),
Saturdays following 9:15am Mass
(*Mentone & Beaumaris*) and at 5:15pm (*Mentone*).

Recently Deceased: Kay Walker, Mary Joan Lavery

Anniversaries: Bernie Grimes, Patria Quinn, David Delac, Joaquin Medeiros, Carlos Funes, Isidore Freris

We pray for those who are sick: Fr James Grant, Max Byers, Jim Lacey, Janis Williams, Mirella Townsend, Ching Price, Michael Papworth, Margaret Rose Durston, Alan Laver, Bernadette Chaplin, Peter & Kaye McCall, Florence Dunn

ROSTERS 10/11 Jan 2026

St Patrick's - Mentone

6:00pm	Commentator/Reader	B Cooling
	Extraordinary Minister	J Stoppa
11:00am	Commentator/Reader	My-Nga Ly
	Extraordinary Minister	S Mathias
5:00pm	Commentator/Reader	J Hughes
	Extraordinary Minister	A Moore

St Joseph's - Black Rock

8:00am	Reader	L Brick
	Commentator	J Shannon
	Extraordinary Minister	T Papworth

St John Vianney's - Parkdale

9:00am	Reader	G Shea
	Commentator	R Tregonning
	Extraordinary Minister	B Fitchet
	Extraordinary Minister to the Sick	B Fitchet
	Flowers	J Brantner
	Pilgrim Statue	T Williams

Stella Maris - Beaumaris

10:30am	Reader	E Meows
	Commentator	G Stockdale
	Extraordinary Minister	Sr Patricia

Readings next week: The Baptism of the Lord - Year A

Isaiah :	42: 1-4, 6-7
Acts:	10: 34-38
Matthew:	3: 13-17

Parish Sacramental Program 2026

For Catholic children in our Partnered Parishes attending non-Catholic schools. Appointments can be made to come and register on the following **Sundays: 18 January & 8 February, 10:30am - 12:30pm, Parish Centre, 3 Mitchell St Mentone**. Lessons are for children (years 3-7) to receive First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion & Confirmation in 2026, and will begin **mid-March 2026**. Please contact the Parish, and staff will contact you to confirm an appointment time: **(P) 9583 2103 or (E) mentoneparkdaleeast@cam.org.au**

Our Parishes are committed to the safety, well-being and dignity of all persons. A copy of our Child Safety policy is on the noticeboard in our churches and on our website www.sspjv.org

Three Kings



We customarily think of the 'wise men' in the gospel as kings and number them as three, although the Gospel text does not oblige us to this. As pagan priests (indeed 'scientists' of the day) the Magi would likely have had considerable prestige and power, though there is no indication they were literally kings. This image has arisen by reading St Matthew's account of the Magi in light of *Isaiah* 60 and *Psalms* 72 (that we hear in today's 1st Reading and Psalm):

Arise, shine out Jerusalem, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples. Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness...camels in throngs

will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord. (*Is* 60:1-3, 6)

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts. Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall serve him... Long may he live, may gold from Sheba be given him! (*Pss* 72:10-11, 15)

Likewise, St Matthew does not state the *number* of the Magi. Most likely from three gifts (gold, frankincense and myrrh) having been mentioned, the interpretation has arisen that there were three wise men, though this is not conclusive, and there were different traditions from ancient times as to their number. (The Magi would also presumably have come with some entourage.)

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh

Frankincense is a resin of trees of the *Boswellia* genus, used in incense and perfumes. (The English word 'frankincense' comes from the French words meaning, 'high-quality incense'.) The bark is slashed, enabling the sap to bleed from the tree and harden. It has been produced for thousands of years especially in the south of the Arabian peninsula (Yemen and Oman), in Somalia (today the main producer), and other parts of north-east Africa. **It was used in Jewish Temple worship**, and is still used as an incense in Catholic and Orthodox liturgy.

Myrrh is likewise a resin, from sap of the trees of the *Commiphora* genus, coming from the same regions as frankincense. It has been used as an incense (again, for example, in Jewish Temple worship); as an anointing oil

(*Ex* 30:23-25); as perfume; and for medicinal purposes.

At the crucifixion of Jesus, Mark's Gospel tells us that he was offered wine mixed with myrrh (*Mk* 15:23), which would have been intended as a painkiller; and **Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea used myrrh and aloes as spices in his burial** (*Jn* 19:39). In Catholic and Orthodox worship myrrh can be used as an incense, as well as an ingredient of the 'balsam' perfume added to olive oil to make the Oil of Chrism (used in the Sacrament of Confirmation).

Later spiritual tradition in the Church has seen significance in the gold as proclaiming Christ's kingship, frankincense as proclaiming his godhead, and myrrh as foreshadowing his suffering.

King Herod

King Herod, often called 'Herod the Great', ruled over Judea, which since 63 BC had been a 'client kingdom' subordinate to the Roman Empire. Herod was a great builder, for example in his **grand reconstruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem**; but he is remembered more for his tyrannical rule.

Born in Idumea (south of Judea) about 73 BC, with an Edomite father and Nabataean mother, he was brought up as a Jew, and he publicly identified as such - though observant Jews may have questioned his sincerity. Possibly his family were converts, like many Idumeans.

Herod's father had risen to favour under Julius Caesar; and on Mark Antony's recommendation, **in 40 BC the Roman Senate named Herod as king of the Jews** - replacing the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty established by the Maccabees a century earlier. **The last Hasmonean king was defeated after a siege of Jerusalem by Herod**, who gave him over to execution by Mark Antony (37 BC). Herod gradually disposed of the remaining Hasmonean male line.

St Matthew's Gospel tells us of Herod's slaughter of the baby boys in Bethlehem, in order to ensure the death of the 'new-born king' of whom the Magi had spoken (*Mt* 2:16-18). This massacre is not documented elsewhere in known historical records, but fits in with everything else we know about Herod's character.

As Bethlehem was a small village, the number of boys under the age of two killed in the 'massacre of the innocents' may have been about twenty. It may not have

been that much remarked on, amidst all his other bloodthirsty acts - such as the killing of one of his wives, two of his sons, his mother-in-law and two of his brothers-in-law.

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus records (*Antiquities of the Jews* 17.6.5; 17.8.2) that Herod even gave orders that many distinguished men be brought to Jerusalem at the time of his death, and themselves killed, to ensure there would be mourning in the land when he died. (Fortunately this was not carried out by his successors.)

Herod's death in Jericho was long held by scholars to have occurred in 4 BC, but it now appears that this was based on a manuscript error propagated in the 1500s, and **research on earlier manuscripts indicates that he more likely died in 1 BC**. (This is a key piece of evidence in deciding the likely year of birth of Jesus himself - which in view of this, we might place in 2 BC, rather than the commonly stated 4 BC.)

Herod's kingdom was divided after his death among three of his sons: Herod Antipas, made tetrarch of Galilee - who would marry Herodias and have St John the Baptist executed (*Mt* 14:1-12), and who was involved in the trial of Jesus (*Lk* 23:6-12); **Philip**, 'tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis' (*Lk* 3:1); and **Archelaus** (*Mt* 2:22) - initially named ethnarch of Judea, Samaria and Idumea.

But in AD 6 Emperor Augustus removed Archelaus for incompetence and brought his area under **direct Roman rule as the province of Judaea, governed by a Roman prefect/procurator; Pontius Pilate would be the fifth of these Roman governors of Judaea** (AD 26 - 36).

HYMNS: Mentone 6pm Vigil Sat Parkdale 9am Sun Mentone 5pm Sun

Mass Setting: Mass of Our Lady, Help of Christians (R. Connolly)

Entrance: CWB II 281 We Three Kings of Orient Are

Offertory: *How lovely shines the Morning Star* op. 67 Nr. 49 – M. Reger

Communion: CWB II 280 The First Noel

Recessional: CWB II 265 Joy to the World

HYMNS: Mentone 11am Sunday

Mass Setting: Mass of Our Lady, Help of Christians (R. Connolly)

Entrance: CWB II 281 We three Kings of Orient Are

Offertory: "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern"
(*How lovely shines the Morning Star*) – M. Reger

Communion: *Prelude on the Introit for Epiphany:*
"Behold, the Sovereign Lord is coming" – M. Duruflé
CWB II 280 The First Noel

Recessional: CWB II 265 Joy to the World

Postlude: *Christum wir sollen loben schon* BWV 611 – J.S. Bach

"We should resplendently praise Christ, Son of the virginal maidservant Mary"

Responsorial Psalm: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

When did the Magi come?

We usually picture the Magi coming to the stable – maybe even while the shepherds were still there. However, **the indication from Matthew's Gospel is that they came later, indeed visiting the Holy Family in a 'house' (Mt 2:11).**



Presumably the Magi's visit was after the Presentation in the Temple (forty days after Jesus' birth) recorded in Luke's Gospel. Once the Magi had failed to return to Herod (who would then realise he had been tricked), it would likely have been thought too dangerous for the Holy Family to go to the Temple in Jerusalem. (St Joseph's dream telling him to go to Egypt took place soon after the departure of the Magi.)

It is even possible that the Holy Family returned for a time to Nazareth immediately after the Presentation, as Luke's Gospel can be interpreted (Lk 2:39), and *then* returned to Bethlehem intending to settle down there (as it was the family town of Joseph). On this account, only then would have come the visit of the Magi (Mt 2:1-12), the escape of the Holy Family from Herod into Egypt (Mt 2:13-15), and finally, Joseph's decision to settle permanently in Nazareth (Mt 2:21-23).

HYMNS: Black Rock 8am Sunday

Entrance: 822 The First Nowell

Offertory: 779 Of The Father's Love Begotten

Communion: 669 Earth has many a noble city

Recessional: 704 Hark the Herald Angels Sing

HYMNS: Beaumaris 10:30am Sunday

Entrance: What Child Is This

Offertory: We Three Kings

Communion: The First Nowell

Recessional: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Readings today: Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah : 60: 1-6

Ephesians: 3: 2-3, 5-6

Matthew: 2: 1-12

**PARISH OFFICE, 3 Mitchell St Mentone
reopens this Monday, 5th January.**

Cuppa N Chat at St Patrick's Mentone
will return on the **second Sunday monthly**
in the Parish Centre following 11am Mass,
commencing **next Sunday, 11th January.**
Please come along, and make yourself
known to fellow Parishioners!

You are invited



ACYF Thank you Morning Tea



**MIDDAY ONWARDS, ST PATRICK'S CENTRE
SUNDAY JAN 18TH**

*To thank the Partnered Parishes for their generosity
our ACYF pilgrims are hosting a
morning tea for all our supporters - all are welcome.*

*Please come along to hear our pilgrim's experiences
at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival
and to try some tasty baked treats.*

Later legends of the Magi

St Matthew does not tell us the names of the Magi. There are different traditions in regions such as Syria, Armenia and Ethiopia, but **in the Western Church we have come to call them (St) Caspar, (St) Melchior and (St) Balthasar.**

The earliest known source for those names is a Greek manuscript from c. AD 500, admittedly long after the events. In 561, when the basilica in Ravenna, Italy, today called St Apollinaris, was reconsecrated under Byzantine Emperor, Justinian I, these were the names written into the mosaic image of the Magi there; and this may have influenced the spread of this naming in western Europe.

Various stories exist about their later lives, Christian conversion, and even martyrdom (though these accounts lack historical verification). Their relics are venerated in Cologne Cathedral in Germany. Again, the historical authenticity of the relics is not proven; the Catholic Church does not generally guarantee authenticity of this or that relic from past eras.

The relics were said to have been discovered in Persia, and brought to Constantinople by St Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great (4th cent.); transferred to Milan (344); and transferred to Cologne (1163).