

Gift Giving with Love, the Magi and St. Vincent

Call to Prayer Leader: We have all heard the words, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive,"* but it might be harder to receive a gift than to give a one.

ALL: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn "We, Three Kings" verses 1-4



1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are; Bear - ing gifts we
2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, Gold - I bring to
3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I: In - cense owns a
4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of
5. Glo - rious now, be - hold him a - rise, King and God and



1. tra - verse a - far Field and foun - tain, Moor and moun - tain,
2. crown him a - gain; King for - ev - er, Ceas - ing nev - er
3. De - i - ty nigh; Pray'r and prais - ing Glad - ly rais - ing,
4. gath - er - ing gloom; Sor - r'wing, sigh - ing, Bleed - ing, dy - ing,
5. Sac - ri - fice; "Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!"



1. Fol - low - ing yon - der star. O star of won - der,
2. O - ver us all to reign.
3. Wor - ship him God on high.
4. Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
5. Sounds through the earth and skies.



star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright, West - ward

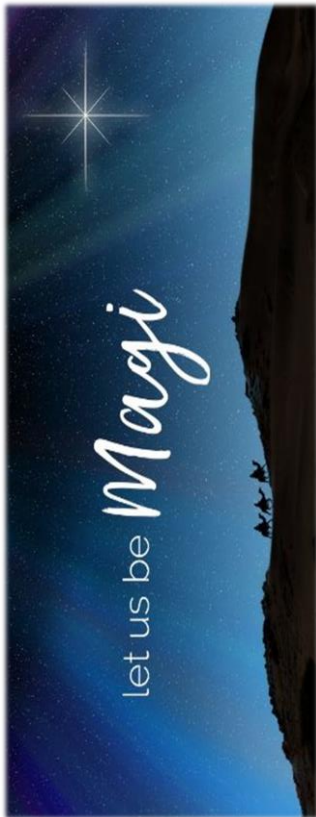


lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to the per - fect light.

Text: 88 44 6 with refrain; based on Matthew 2:1-11.
Text and music: *Carols, Hymns and Songs*, 1863; John H. Hopkins Jr., 1820-1891, alt.

Reading 1 The gifts of the Magi In the ancient world, gifts were rarely exchanged between people of unequal status. In the unlikely circumstance that a ruler gave a gift to a peasant, the recipient was expected to give something back as a debt of gratitude, in the form of loyalty, a tribute or a tithe. Gifts were used to secure power and privilege for benefactors. In that light, the gifts of the Magi were unheard of at the time Jesus. When the three kings brought gifts to Jesus, they turned gift-giving on its head. The wise men brought their gifts with no expectation of repayment, with no debt of gratitude attached. In the world birthed in that stable so long ago, the kings joyfully leave their gifts for the poor couple and go away empty-handed. No strings attached, no debt of gratitude; only gifts freely given. Is not this the mirror of God's gift to us in the person of Jesus? The Magi's gift and the gift of the Word become flesh were freely given without strings attached.

Response Pause for silent reflection.



Reading 2 Vincent's gift of love One of Vincent's frequently cited quotes reads, *"It is only for your love alone that the poor will forgive you the bread you give to them."* It's not really a quote. It comes from the screenplay "Monsieur Vincent." In light of the insight into the subversiveness of the gifts of the Magi, we can see why the words are often attributed to Vincent. Vincent had a profound sensitivity to how gifts might come with strings attached. Vincent showed a profound respect for the dignity of those he served. People sense that he has first loved them. Love is a gift without any limitations, without conditions. The Magi mirror the utter gratuity of God's love. If we are in the image and likeness of God, we are called to be gratuitous in our love. After all, Jesus freely gave the love he experienced in the community of the Trinity. He did not pay the Father and the Spirit back. He, and Vincent after Him, taught us how to pay it forward by sharing this love with those who live in poverty. adapted from *Beyond Gift Guilt, the Magi and St. Vincent de Paul*, John Freund, CM, January 6, 2018 <https://famvin.org/en/2018/01/06/beyond-gift-guilt-the-magi-and-st-vincent-de-paul/>



Reflection and Sharing

How do I experience God's unconditional love for me?

What is my attitude and approach in my giving to those who are marginalized and poor?

Intercessions Leader: Let us pray to our God, the giver of every gift and blessing.

Response ALL: Help us receive as well as give, O God.

- +that we may learn from Jesus to receive graciously and then give from the heart, we pray ...
- +that we may share the love of God by cherishing God's presence in persons who are poor, we pray ...
- +that we may not compromise another's freedom by insisting on being charitable and generous, we pray ...
- +that we may offer others what will enhance their self-esteem and bring them true happiness, we pray ...
- +that we may appreciate and treasure God's life as we experience it in those living in poverty, we pray ...



(Additional prayers are invited.)

Our Father Leader: Let us pray to God, the true gift-giver, in the words Jesus taught us ...

ALL: Our Father ...

Closing Prayer "We, Three Kings" verse 5

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Prayer Texts

Psalm 72: 10 "... kings shall offer gifts ..."

Matthew 2: 11 "... they opened their treasures and offered Him gifts ..."