

There are a variety of funny social media memes about the impracticality of the gifts the Magi brought. One I've seen quite a bit says that if it were three wise women, they would have brought diapers, casseroles and formula.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh, however, were perfectly fitting gifts for a newborn king. The Magi seemed to be unbothered by how mismatched their gifts were to the apparent circumstances of this newborn king.

Hundreds of nativity scenes aside, Jesus and his family wouldn't still have been in the stable by the time the Magi arrived. But neither would they have been living in a palace. There was nothing about an ordinary peasant family with a baby born in a backwater town of the Roman Empire that would have suggested royalty.

But the Magi knew, because they had a light to guide them.

John's gospel is all about light and about seeing. Jesus said I am the light of the world. Light helps us see. If we walk into a dark room looking for something, we turn on a light to help us see.

But in the story of the Magi...and in John's gospel...the light helps us to see deeper than the surface...they helps us see things as they really are beneath the initial appearance.

Sometimes light reveals evil which prefers to stay hidden in the dark.

But the light in today's readings invites us to see something our eyes alone might not tell us. It helps us see what isn't so obvious.

That kind of seeing comes up several times in the John reading.

John says, Look! Here is the lamb of God.

Two disciples start following Jesus. They want to know where he's staying...they're curious and are trying to get a grasp on who Jesus is. But Jesus doesn't really answer them. He just says, come and see.

When Nathaniel scoffs at Philip trying to tell him about this Jesus, Philip just said, come and see.

Epiphany is about seeing. It's about light that has come into the world...a light that shows us things we might not otherwise see. And we open today with the invitation from Jesus...come and see.

I don't know about you, but it does not seem to me that 2026 is off to a bright, shiny start. I find the things happening in our world deeply troubling.

I don't have all the answers to the problems of the world – that's never been my call, contrary to what my ego may sometimes say.

But I do believe I have a call to be a partner with God in making a world that better reflects the light.

I believe that there is still a guiding light for us, and I believe that God is showing me...and will continue to show me what is mine to do in this crazy, messed up world that God still loves.

And I trust that in the midst of troubling things...dark things...that light does still shine in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.