

+WEEKLY SERMON

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A friend called Fatima

As the season of Advent begins our thoughts turn to incarnation of our Lord and Saviour. Our Lord came to be amongst us, to live and be with us. We all know the story probably better than any other and sometimes some of the marvel and mystery becomes lost in the things we do and put into our celebrations. We busy ourselves with organizing and decorating, deciding on carols, readings and services - lots of them. We can become more fixed on the things we do rather than the actual, complete and utterly world changing event: the birth of Jesus.

One element of the story that always stands out to me are the travels of a group (we assume three men but scripture makes no mention of numbers) of astrologers. They are alerted by a star, travel some distance - presumably on camels - check out the story with the local man in charge (pretty evil despot) and find Jesus. They worship and bring really valuable gifts. They are then instructed by God in a dream to return home and avoid speaking with Herod.

Here are people (not Jews or Christians - the term hasn't been invented yet) probably pagan who see the power of Jesus and how significant his birth is, they make serious effort to get there and bring gifts. My friend Fatima is a Muslim and she sees the power of Jesus. At Christmas she asks me how she can serve others on Christmas Day. She knows that a number of churches put on lunches for those who won't have a Christmas dinner. Often they serve the homeless but also those who live on their own. Fatima travels and serves and sees the good that the Christians do and wants to be part of it. Wants to be part of the message of Immanuel - God with us.

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