

Today we are celebrate Epiphany Sunday. The story of the three Wiseman, the guiding star, and their giving of their gifts to the Christ child, their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

In the light of this story of then, we turn to our story of now. The giving of our gifts to God. We may not have gold, frankincense or myrrh to give, yet gifts for God are precious.

What gifts do you have?

Many find it difficult to name their gift, their gifts. We often rely, need, another to recognise and name our gifts before we are free to embrace our particular giftedness.

You may recall on Advent IV I suggested Mary's Christmas story gave us 3 gifts - the gift of community ; the gift of blessing ; the gift of hope.

I asked a number of questions on each of these gifts, with the one of the gift of blessing being one also for today ...

How would our church change if we made a point of discerning, naming, and blessing the divine gifts we see in each other?

How would we change? Please note : not would we change?

Mary Schramm in her book, *Gifts of Grace*, suggests that there are five steps in ascertaining and using your gifts, these steps being -

The first step is to discover your gifts, and you always discover your gifts in relationship. You rarely or never discover your gifts in isolation. As in Mary's gift of community. Mary came to embrace and sing of her giftedness when she was in the company of Elizabeth.

The second step is to accept the gifts that God has given you. To accept the gifts that God has given to you, and those not given to you.

The third step is to enjoy your God-given gifts. To take pleasure in them, to appreciate what God has gifted you.

The fourth step is to develop and use your gifts.

The fifth step involves all of the steps, in surrendering your gifts to God.

That's what was wise about the Wisemen. Their wisdom wasn't merely giving their material gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, it was the gift of their total selves to their journey to find Christ.

They were totally devoted to the mission of finding Christ, using all of their resources, their time and energy. They were, are we?

Wisdom is giving all of your gifts to Jesus Christ.

So those are the five steps of your gifts:

discovering, accepting, rejoicing, developing, and giving them to the work of God in this world.

When we discover our gifts, use your gifts, and surrender our gifts, we are doing the will of God for our life.

Mary Schramm, the author of these 5 steps, also discusses the want of many to discover the will of God for their life.

What is God's will for my life? For me?

What does God want me to do with me one precious life? In the words of another Mary, Mary Oliver.

Very simply, God wants you to discover, develop and share your gifts. To do the will of God is to discover and use your God-given resources to make the world a better place. This doesn't have to be a huge commitment or project. In the words of Desmond Tutu, remembering his death earlier this week, if we all do our little bit of good, we can overwhelm the world. And we will be the kingdom of God in this time, in this space. As it is in heaven. We will be our own wise person.

How would our church change if we made a point of discerning, naming, and blessing the divine gifts we see in each other? Could this be our mission in 2022? Our new year resolution? Though not one to hold onto for but a moment. Discerning, naming, and blessing the divine gifts we see in each other.

That could be our wise way with and for each other.

This is how Christmas makes its way out of the stable and into our life.

We will be the wise men and women of this parish.

This being Mary's final gift – the gift of hope.

*Wendy*