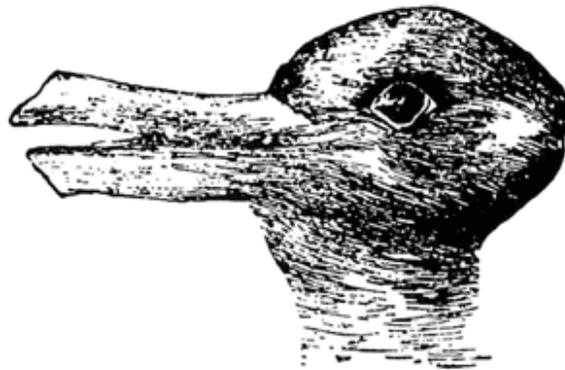


## **Father Philip's Address to St Paul's Assembly**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014**  
**Theme for the week: Epiphany**

**Matthew 3:13-17**

What do you see in this picture? It may be one which you have seen before – but depending on how you are looking at it or which way you are looking at it, you will see either a Duck or a Rabbit!



It is one of those pictures which you think you have seen one thing, and then all of a sudden it becomes clear that you are looking at something quite different.

It becomes clear – it is revealed – or it becomes MANIFEST.

The word manifest is one which speaks of something becoming obvious or being shown clearly.

A political manifesto is a document which is written by an individual or group of people or published by a political party and which makes clear what that person or those people believe should be done if they are in power.

Twelve days after Christmas the Church celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany. It is a celebration in which we remember that Jesus manifested himself – showed himself to all the nations. Not just to the Jewish people. So we had the reading about the Wise Men, the Magi, who followed the star and brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. to the child Jesus.

If you follow the Chaplaincy Facebook page, last week you would have had three messages about those three gifts and their meaning. ([www.facebook.com/stpcc](http://www.facebook.com/stpcc))

The gift of Gold – an expensive and precious item of the wealthy – which was a sign that Jesus is a King.

The gift of Frankincense. – We use incense sometimes in Church and it was used in the Temple in Jesus' day to show the presence of God. As a gift to the child Jesus it was a sign that Jesus is God.

The gift of Myrrh – an ointment which was used on those who had died to prepare them for their burial. As a gift to Jesus it was a sign of his death on the cross for our salvation.

As well as celebrating that feast of the Epiphany after Christmas, the Church also celebrates and has the reading of two other times when Jesus manifested his glory – showed his glory, showed that he was God.

The first of them was our reading today, the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John. As we heard in the reading, when Jesus was baptized the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit, like a dove, came down upon Jesus and there was a voice from heaven which said “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

The second reading the Church listens to after Christmas is one which we will have tomorrow at assembly. It is the first miracle of Jesus. At a wedding, he changed the water into wine when they had run out of wine. Apart from being quite useful for the host of the wedding, it manifested his glory in this first miracle. It showed his glory.

Tomorrow our hymn, “Songs of thankfulness and praise” talks about these three events of the manifestation of the glory of Jesus. It is worth thinking about it before you sing it tomorrow.

First of all it reminds us of the wise men and how the glory of Jesus was revealed: “Manifested by the star to the sages from afar; branch of royal David's stem.”

It goes on to recall the Baptism of Jesus and the revelation of God's glory there: “Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest and King supreme;”

Before mentioning the first miracle of Jesus at Cana: “and at Cana wedding-guest in thy Godhead manifest; manifest in power divine, changing water into wine”.

Of course these three events are not the only times when God has revealed his glory. He revealed it time and time again in the Old Testament and throughout the New Testament. It is made manifest for us today:

In the celebration of the Eucharist where we take bread and wine as Jesus commanded us to, and his glory is manifest as he gives us his body and blood. In the Scriptures, the Bible, the Word of God, and in the Community of the Church, in its teaching and in its actions.

God also manifests his glory in those who are in need. In the homeless and the hungry, in the sick and they dying and in prisoners and those who are deprived of freedom.

If we have eyes to look, we can find the glory of god revealed, the manifestation of God.

And of course the most important place to start is YOU. How you respond to those in need. How you live in community with others. How you take up the challenge of Jesus to follow him. These are all opportunities to manifest the glory of God today. Now.

May we all be inwardly transformed through Christ and show forth his glory in the world.

Thank you.

**The text of the hymn “Songs of thankfulness”**

Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise,  
manifested by the star to the sages from afar;  
branch of royal David's stem in thy birth at Bethlehem;  
anthems be to thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest and King supreme;  
and at Cana, wedding guest, in thy Godhead manifest;  
manifest in power divine, changing water into wine;  
anthems be to thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole palsied limbs and fainting soul;  
manifest in valiant fight, quelling all the devil's might;  
manifest in gracious will, ever bringing good from ill;

anthems be to thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Sun and moon shall darkened be, stars shall fall, the heavens shall flee;  
Christ will then like lightning shine, all will see his glorious sign;  
all will then the trumpet hear, all will see the Judge appear;  
thou by all wilt be confessed, God in man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, mirrored in thy holy Word;  
may we imitate thee now, and be pure, as pure art thou;  
that we like to thee may be at thy great Epiphany;  
and may praise thee, ever blest, God in man made manifest.