**6 January**

**The Epiphany**

The subtitle in the Book of Common Prayer for this, one of the principal feasts of the Church, is ‘The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles’. This emphasises that, from the moment of the incarnation, the good news of Jesus Christ is for all: Jew and Gentile, the wise and the simple, male and female. Nothing in the Greek text of the gospels indicates that the Magi were all male: even the idea that there were three and they were kings is a much later, non-scriptural, tradition. The date of this feast goes back to the tradition of the Eastern Church, which celebrated both the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ on 6 January, whilst the West celebrated the Nativity on 25 December. As often happens, the two dates merged into a beginning and an end of the same celebration. The Western Church adopted ‘the twelve days of Christmas’ climaxing on 5 January, the eve of Epiphany, or ‘Twelfth Night’. The implication by the fifth century was that this was the night on which the Magi arrived. The complications of dating became even more confused with the changing in the West from the Julian to the Gregorian Calendar, the Eastern Church refusing to play any part in such a radical change. So this day remains the chief day of celebrating the incarnation in Orthodox Churches.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**6 January**

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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