

*(Need representations of a diamond (top from cut glass decanter, ruby and pearl (balls of Christmas tree)*

How many wise men were there?

Tradition is three – Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar – bible does not say

There is a story of a 4<sup>th</sup> wise man called Arteban, a friend of the other three, story has it he was a very clever, very compassionate doctor.

Plan was for Arteban to travel with the other three to visit the King – he was going to bring jewels, diamond, ruby and a pearl.

He was always late – if you are not there we are going without you.

He was late – but for a very good reason – on his way to meet them he came across a sick man by the roadside – he stopped to look after him until he was better – but friends went on without him

Needed to organise his own transport – to hire a camel train he had to sell one of his jewels – most beautiful pearl – at least I will have the other two to give to the King.

Arrived in Bethlehem – late – the family had gone – story had it to Egypt – he stayed in a house for the night planning to follow.

During the night he awakened to a sound of shouting and screaming – soldiers had come to the town with orders to kill every baby under two – there was a baby in the house – then there was a hammering on the door – Arteban told the family to stay very quiet – he went to the door – a soldier was there, his sword dripping with blood – Arteban took the ruby out of his pocket and waved it under the nose of the soldier – the soldier grinned with greed, took the jewel and left – he now only had his diamond – but at least the child was safe and he still had his diamond to give to the King.

He went on down into Egypt – looked for the family but never found them. Spent the next 30 years working as a doctor until he decided he would like to spent his last years at home.

Still with the diamond in his pocket he travelled home through Jerusalem - arrived at time of Passover – great excitement – there was crucifixion on – one of the victims sounded like the King he had been seeking – thought I could buy his life with the diamond.

On his way out of the city came across a slave girl being chased by a gang of men – hid behind him – they ordered him to get out of the way. She was hers and they were going to deal with her.

Reached into his pocket – took out the diamond – gave it to the men and said ‘She is now mine – leave her alone.’ Turned to the girl and said ‘You are now free’

Now no gifts left – wandered sadly back into town – earthquake – hit by rubble – fell to the ground – crowd gathered round, heard him mumbling ‘Lord when did I see you sick, or hungry, or in prison and visit you?’

Voice seemed to come from heaven ‘As much as you did it to the least of these brothers of mine you did it to me.’ Arteban smiled and died knowing that the King had received his gifts.