

## **The Feast of the Epiphany: SEARCHING FOR THE KING MT. 2:1-12**

The Magi can serve as models for us on our faith journey in this year 2021 and beyond. These guys were single-minded. They refused to be put off by difficulties and hardships. Part of the text of the Gospel today says: ***“There in front of them was the star they had seen rising.”*** From this sentence, we can conclude that in between they travelled in darkness, and had to ask and seek and enquire. Their journey was neither simple nor easy. They encountered difficulties, doubts and dangers. Yet, in spite of these they persevered in their quest, and were rewarded when they finally found Christ. This is why their story has such relevance for us. Like them we too are on a journey. When we start out on some road (whether it be following the Christian vocation, or following some other vocation or profession), we too are attracted by something bright — an ideal or vision or hope. But this initial 'star' does not remain forever in our sky. It grows dim. Clouds get in the way and deprive us of its light.

And we must expect to encounter difficulties and doubts. Some people think they are losing their faith when they experience doubt. We must not be surprised when this happens. We must imitate the Magi. We must not be too proud to ask for guidance. We must believe that the darkness will pass, and once again we will see the initial star beckoning to us. When the Magi found Christ, they offered him gold, frankincense and myrrh. This shows what happens to those who find Christ. Their hearts are awakened and burst into life. When we find Christ and offer our love to him, he will help us to open up the treasures of goodness that lie buried inside us, so that we can offer 'gifts' to our brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor as Christ was.

Having worshipped Christ, the Magi 'returned to their own country by another route'. This suggests not just a new geographical route, but a new mentality. Having met Christ and heard his Gospel, we too will travel through life by a different route. We will have different attitudes, different values, different goals. It is impossible to encounter Christ without it affecting the way we live our lives. Stars are powerful symbols in human life as it was during the writing of this Gospel we hear today. Many nations place stars on their flags and in their official seals. Those who attain a certain level of excellence or fame in their profession are called "stars." (Hollywood Stars) Inspirational speakers or motivational speakers, will tell us to reach for the stars. Though the Stars remain out of reach, we are always drawn toward them. Stars also entice us with the way they twinkle. The Magi were led by a star that as they traveled to a foreign land to find the one for whom it shone!

This Epiphany star can still lead people to Christ as it did the magi. The trick is to see its twinkling points for what they are. Through the eyes of faith, we see how the three magi themselves are twinkling points of this star. Their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh can hold as much meaning for us as they did for those early Christians who first heard the Gospel of Matthew proclaimed. Gold is NOT simply money, but it is something valuable and worthy of a king. Think of how we all hand over freely what is valuable to us —our time, our attention, our money—for those people and things that are most precious to us. The question for us Christians is whether we, like the magi, can hand over our gold to Christ. Giving ourselves to Christ is the most precious gift we can ever give to him! I think Matthew in today's Gospel is telling all of us how to approach Jesus. We are to continue to search for him until we have found him and to pay him homage as the magi did. We are not to treat Jesus with indifference like the Jews of Jesus' time, who had answers as to how he could be found but were not interested enough to go find him. We come to him today bringing our gifts, our time, our treasure, our love, our devotion. *We know through faith, the Scriptures and the sacraments we have found him, and yet knowing we are still on a journey* to get to know him better and to love him more, and we still have some distance to travel. That's why we're here today.

**Amen.**