



January 7, 2024

The Epiphany of Our Lord

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Matthew 2:10



Dear Friends;

The Magi were not kings, that is a misinterpretation of the Greek. They were a powerful class of sages who in ancient Persian society advised their rulers. They looked to the movement of the stars and constellations which they believed had influence over human affairs. Searching the skies, they interpreted the will of their gods.

The Magi represent wise and learned women and men who seek God in other world religions, philosophies, and sciences. We grow from the wisdom of others if we are open. Following the light of reason, we come to the Divine. The Holy Spirit inspires seekers to a journey where they will come to a personal encounter with God.

The Magi had wealth, status, and economic security in their society. They could have remained content with what they already knew and possessed. Instead, they let themselves be unsettled by a question. *"Where is he who was born King of the Judean people? We have seen his star."*

The Magi looked for new and greater horizons. They were not content to plod through life with the same tired answers and clichés. Their eyes looked to the heavens. Pope Benedict XVI described them as *"Men with a restless heart...they were filled with expectation, not satisfied with their secure income and respectable place in society... They were seekers after God."* (6 January 2013)

What can we learn from these seekers of the Light. First, they *set out* at the appearance of the star. The Magi teaches us that we must set out anew each day, life as in faith is a journey. Faith is not armor that encases us in a protective shell. Faith is a pilgrimage, a constant and restless search for God. Faith always looks for a way forward.

The next lesson the Magi teach is to *ask questions*. They inquire where the Divine Child is to be found. They teach us that we need to question things. It is in the questions of our hearts, and consciences that God often speaks. God addresses us more with questions than answers. We need to be unsettled by the questions of our children, of our doubts, hopes, and desires of the people of our time. We need to entertain the questions.

The Magi *defy* Herod. We need to have a courageous faith unafraid to challenge the sinister logic of the powerful. We must become seeds of justice and solidarity with all people of goodwill. We live in a world where modern Herods seek the destruction of the poor and innocent. We must not compromise but resist evil.

The Magi *return by another route* to their homeland. They challenge us to take new paths. The Holy Spirit guides us to new things. Amid the cruelties and violence of the world, the Spirit prompts us to bring the Gospel to hearts of those distant, indifferent, or without hope. The Magi show us new paths that lead us forward to find *"great joy."*

Finally, the climactic end of their journey the Magi arrive at their destination, *"they fell down and worshiped the Child."* The Magi reminds us that the goal of our searching is renewed strength. That happens only when we are in the presence of God. Our desire for God only grows when we place ourselves in God's presence. May the star of God's love illuminate our path to the world of God's justice and mercy.

Peace,

Fr Ron

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