

As Christians

We are always called to see the Old Testament in light of the New

Our feast of the Epiphany is no different

This is not something that came out of the blue

It is something that is found in ancient Jewish writings

Isaiah foresees a day when a divine light will shine on all God's people

All the nations will be drawn toward this light

Israelites and gentiles alike

The Israelites were called to be a nation of priests

To lead all the nations to God

Isaiah knew this

And he speaks of a time when it will be fulfilled

Although things would get worse before they got better

By the time of St Paul

Rather than bringing the nations together

The leaders of Israel

The scribes and Pharisees, were separating them

**Over time, the Israelites fell again and again to the temptation
of idolatry**

In an attempt to overcome this weakness

The Israelite nation separated herself from anything Gentile

They treated each other as enemies

But Christ changed that

As St Paul writes:

The Gentiles are coheirs

Members of the same body

Copartners in Christ Jesus through the Gospel

The Magi are the first Gentiles to recognize this

But this was the exception

Everyone thought there could be no cooperation between them

This is why Herod thought he had accomplices

These Magi were the same as he was

Gentiles in a Jewish land

So he thinks they will help him find this new-born king

But they are more interested in truth and love than power

They probably could have made a lucrative deal with Herod

But in humility, they leave this behind

Going off again following this star

To the place where it stops

They enter the house and find the child with Mary his mother

Here they do something they did not do before King Herod

They fall prostrate before this child

And offer their gifts

Gold in recognition of his royalty

Frankincense to recognize his divinity

And myrrh as a prophecy of his passion and death

The same three gifts mentioned in Isaiah

Not given to the earthly king

But offered to this little child

And then, receiving a message in a dream

They returned home by another way

After their encounter with the Christ child

They are forever changed

Has our encounter with Christ this Christmas season changed us?

Do we recognize him in our midst?

Are we still searching?

I hope the answer to all of these is 'yes'

Because it is all part of our Christian life

We seek Christ

We need to do our part

But it isn't all on us

Because we are sought after as well

This is where those who say they are spiritual but not religious err

They think it is all on them

They think they can find God in nature, their work

They can find him in their vocation or within their families

And they are not wrong

God is in all things

But they are not right either

Because they reject where he can be found like nowhere else

In the Word

In the Sacraments

In the Church He himself gives to us

Where we can find a personal, living God

Where we can have a personal relationship with him

We don't define him

We don't find him on our terms

Limit him to our definition

We recognize Him in our midst

God sets the ground rules

And He seeks us more than we will ever know in this life

His desire for our salvation comes at a steep price

Ultimately, it comes at the price of His blood

But to get there, he had to become one of us first

So He doesn't come with a show of force

He doesn't force our adoration

He doesn't demand that we serve Him

He comes as a little child

With an invitation and a promise

One that the Magi recognize, when the religious leaders are blind

The same invitation is there

Humility allows the Magi to see

While pride blinds the Pharisees and Scribes

And a lust for power blinds Herod

The same invitation is here for us

An invitation to seek Him

The star was the Magi's GPS

God's positioning star

The same thing we find in the Church

God's GPS in Sacred Scripture

In the Sacraments

Especially in the Eucharist

The Magi encounter this little child

But they see the King of kings

They see the Way

The Truth

They see Life

They recognize the gift of God right before their eyes

And they return home by another way

They cannot be the same as they were before

When we see in the light of God, it changes us

It changes how we perceive one another

How we relate to each other

Whether they are Catholic Christians

Christians of other faiths

Or pagans

Christ did not come for only a few

He came for all

Last week our church was packed full

Where are our brothers and sisters today?

They are seeking, or they would not have been here

Do they have anyone to bring them to the Child?

To show them the way

As Catholics, we have a special gift

We have the fullness of the faith

St. Justin says the seeds of the Word are scattered throughout the world

But they need to sprout and grow

We are called to a special mission

To build the Kingdom of God here on earth

Showing others the way

Offering our gifts

Not gold, frankincense and myrrh

But thanksgiving, adoration and service

Bringing them to the Child

Seeking Him who seeks us first

This is the true gift of Christmas

Not only for ourselves, but for the entire world