

COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

JANUARY 7, 2024

Stars Will Lead Us to the Savior of the World

Based on: Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

By Marianne Couture

Looking for a king, guided by a mysterious star. This Sunday we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord and, in the Gospel, we hear about the Magi's adoration of the Christ Child.

"Epiphany" means to show forth or to make an appearance. Matthew's Gospel is the only Gospel that tells of the Magi's visit to baby Jesus.

Following the star shows the Magi - important, wise and learned men - must have studied the stars. They noticed a new star in the sky and considered it a sign of a special king's birth. They began their journey to look for the newborn king.

The Magi were not Jews. It is said they came from "the East," perhaps from countries such as Arabia, Persia, Babylon or somewhere else east of Palestine. Following a star for a long trip must have been difficult. It meant extra traveling at night.

Arriving in Jerusalem, the Magi asked where they could find the newborn king. When Herod, the king of Judea, heard about this, he became nervous and called the Magi to his palace. He sent them to Bethlehem to search for the child and to let him know when they found him so he, too, could honor the newborn king.

The star led them to Bethlehem where they found the baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph. It has been thought the Magi were named Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar.

Filled with joy, they knelt in adoration before Jesus and gave him their gifts. Melchior brought gold, a costly metal used by kings and a sign of Jesus' royalty; Caspar brought frankincense, a type of incense that gives off a pleasant-smelling smoke and a sign of Jesus' holiness. Balthazar brought myrrh, a perfumed ointment used to prepare the dead for burial and a sign of Jesus' humanity and his future suffering and death.

After their visit, the Magi were warned in a dream not to return to Herod's palace. They went back to their countries by another way.

The Magi's visit to Jesus shows that Jesus came to earth out of love for all the peoples of the world — no matter from where we come.

God also gives us "stars" to follow — parents, family, the church, the Mass, the Scriptures, clergy, religious, teachers, friends, and books. They can all lead us to Jesus, the Savior of the world!

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