

Epiphany Sermon (by Fr. Gabor) 2019

Today many celebrity TV programmes are produced and perhaps this reflects a basic need in society to have someone who can inspire us; someone who can bring the best out of us. Of course every success requires sincere preparations and perseverance along the way.

The wise men in today's Gospel story also wanted to be successful in terms of finding the Messiah. So they had to do a lot of preparations by way of studying ancient texts and trying to find the true meaning of these texts so that they can identify accurately which star to follow, which one leads to the Messiah. I don't think you need much study to realise that none of the stars in TV shows are trying to lead you to the Messiah.

Our guiding stars are more likely living quiet lives in society and in the church, who quietly go about their daily lives, showing a remarkable courage of faith, just like the wise men.

To make a long journey into the unknown to find the Messiah, which basically the Christian life journey is all about, you need first of all faith. The star symbolises the faith that guides us in our journey through unknown territories of life. Our faith journey started some time ago when our parents and the church taught us about God and the Church, and helped us to understand properly our ancient text, the Bible. If we are to find the Messiah our faith journey has to continue by way of searching our ancient text, the Bible, by listening to the teaching of the church and by following the examples of inspiring people; all this in the light of the faith of the church.

The journey of the wise men reveals another aspect of our faith journey. It tells us that just as the star was only visible in the dark, so the light of faith is more visible when we go through a dark or difficult period in our lives. We can come closer to Jesus sometimes only when we struggle, and we can cope, provided we hold on to the light of faith and not turn away from it.

When the wise men lost track they asked for guidance as we heard in the Gospel story. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' In the same way, if we lose track on our faith journey and struggle we also have to ask for guidance from those who know how and where to find Jesus, instead of giving up and thinking that God has abandoned us.

The fact that the wise men travel as a community also shows that faith journey is not just a private journey. It is a community journey, a family journey; a journey of people who know each other. A sense of community gives them

confidence and the opportunity to encourage each other when they lose heart. This is what family and friends are for, this is what the church is for. As a group the wise men have the opportunity to discuss and share their thoughts, fears and doubts. As Christians we should do the same, but for that we have to become more like a community where people care about each other **AND NOT JUST PASS BY EACH OTHER** before and after Mass. To build a great sense of community is the purpose of tea & coffee after Mass, where we have the opportunity to get to know each other better, and encourage each other on our faith journey. Jesus is with us and in each one of us. So to find Christ we need each other.

The wise men also offered gifts to the Lord Jesus. This is a reminder to all of us that we cannot just go to Church and go home without offering our gifts and skills for the life of the Church, but be involved in an area of church life where you can use your skills and talents.

Finally it is important to note that the wise men did not return home the same way, but on a different route. This means that once you have been to Church and encountered Christ your life journey must continue in a different way; your way of thinking and attitude toward people has to change, and become more like Christ's way of thinking and attitude towards people.