

2020.01.05 Homily Epiphany 2020

Our culture today is marked by stars and celebrities, but the question is ‘which star leads you to the Saviour?’ Which one leads you to a personal encounter with the Saviour who will lead you back to the Father? Many of the stars are attractive, but a true star doesn’t attract your attention to himself or herself, but to someone much greater, and once it has lead you to this greater person, it disappears (like St. John the Baptist).

The journey of the wise men is a wonderful symbolic representation of what a successful faith journey looks like, where success means that we have found the Messiah, the Christ.

First of all OPENNESS to God’s inspirations in our hearts, and to His messages are very important for success. The wise men were open to the possibility that the Messiah could arrive in any age, even in their lifetime. So they became inspired to look for Him, to search the ancient texts. They were thirsty to know when and where the Messiah was to be born, and to meet Him in person. This openness and desire to seek and know God as someone whom you can meet personally, who has a personal message to you, is missing from the hearts of so many Catholics. If you are one of them, this is the time to fan into flame your desire to know God’s message for you personally through the Scriptures, through prayerful reflections and through the study of Church teaching. Don’t stop your faith journey and go into an autopilot religion, but continue to follow your star, the light of faith, because God wants to build up a personal relationship with you.

The journey of the wise men tells us about another very important aspect of a successful faith journey. It happens in DARKNESS, because only light can lead you to the Messiah, the light of faith, and in that case you need darkness so that you can see the light; faith becomes very fruitful in the darkness. I think this is a very encouraging message, because it tells me that you can come closer to Jesus sometimes only in the dark, ie. when darkness surrounds you, and things don’t go well. Darkness and difficult times help you to concentrate on what really brings you closer to Jesus, namely your faith. This is what the baptismal candle also symbolises.

When they lose track the wise men also ASK FOR GUIDANCE as we heard in the Gospel story. ‘Where is the infant king of the Jews?’ In the same way, if you lose track on your faith journey and you struggle you also have to ask for guidance from those who know how to find Jesus, instead of giving up and thinking that God has abandoned you or nobody cares.

The story of the wise men also shows that a successful faith journey is not merely a private journey. It is a **COMMUNITY JOURNEY** as well, a family journey; a journey TOGETHER with people who know each other, because the wise men travel as a community. It gives them confidence and the opportunity

to encourage each other's faith when they lose heart. This is what friends are for, this is what the church is for.

As a community they have the opportunity to discuss and share their thoughts and fears and doubts, and as Christians we should be able to do the same, but first we have to become a community where people trust each other and care about each other **AND NOT JUST PASS BY EACH OTHER** before and after Mass. It was good to see for example that so many times last year we came together either for our retreats, or for tea and coffee after mass, where we could shared our faith and encourage one another.

The reason why faith journey also has to be a **COMMUNITY JOURNEY**, is that the Christ whom you want to find is in the members of the faith community which you belong to. Christ should not only be your image that you worship.

Finally it is important to note that the wise men did not return home the same way as they came, but in a different way. This symbolically means that once you have encountered Christ, His love and care, your life journey will inevitably has to take a new course; your way of thinking and attitude toward people has to change, according to the pattern of Christ's thinking and attitude.