

## DISCOVERING AND WORSHIPPING GOD WITH THE MAGI!

What can we learn from the amazing story of the Magi? First, like the Magi we are all on a journey seeking to find God. Like the Magi we all need to discover the Star that can guide us to God. In earlier homilies, I have referred to the need to have a GPS that can provide us a roadmap. While it is easy to get lost as we are distracted by the many events of daily life, wouldn't it be great if we could have a GPS instructing us to find a new road whenever we get away from the path leading to God, our final destination. I called such GPS: God-Provided Star. To keep us on track, this GPS can also guide us to closest locations for confessions; if there is a theme that I like to repeat again and again it is the importance to go regularly to the sacrament of reconciliation, but also to go immediately after having committed a mortal sin.

Another lesson we can learn from the Magi is how to WORSHIP GOD. We hear from Matthew's Gospel (2:1-12) that "*The star came and stopped over the place where the child was. The magi were OVERJOYED at seeing the star, and on entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother. THEY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES and DID HOMAGE. Then they OPENED THEIR TREASURES and OFFERED HIM GIFTS of GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, and MYRRH.*" This is a wonderful way of WORSHIPPING GOD. It can inspire us when we come to encounter God at church on any Sunday, not just Epiphany Sunday.

First, any encounter with God should be JOYFUL: to be in the presence of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit should take away any fear or sadness from our hearts, and lead us to peace and joy. It is a CELEBRATION! Let us take away frowns when we enter church and put on smiles. Let us also bring those smiles to the world when we leave church.

Second, we ought to prostrate ourselves. This is why we genuflect when we enter the Church where Jesus, who is God, is present in the tabernacle. This is why we genuflect at the time of the Consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ. Genuflection is an act of adoration and a sign of total humility in front of the all-powerful God.

Let us listen to what Pope Benedict XVI in his book "Jesus of Nazareth" says about Matthew's narration of the Magi: "*The wise men (magi) do a PROSKYNESIS (Greek text of Gospel) before the Royal child, that is to say they THROW THEMSELVES onto the GROUND before him. This is the homage that is offered to a divine King. The gifts brought by the wise men may be explained in similar terms. They are not practical gifts, of a kind that the holy family have had a use for at this moment. They*

*express the same thing as the PROSKYNESIS: they acknowledge the Royal dignity of him to whom they are offered. Gold and incense are mentioned in Isaiah 60:6 gifts of homage that the Gentiles will place before the God of Israel. In the Church's tradition the THREE GIFTS have been thought to represent three aspects of the MYSTERY OF CHRIST: the gold points to Jesus' KINGSHIP, the incense to his DIVINE sonship, the myrrh to the mystery of his PASSION...St John tells us that Nicodemus had prepared myrrh for the anointing of Jesus' body (John 19:39). Through the myrrh, then, the mystery of the Cross is once again associated with Jesus's kingship and mysteriously proclaimed in the worship offered by the wise men."*

Third, what are the gifts that we are supposed to bring to God when we come to worship? The magi OPENED THEIR TREASURES... What are our own treasures? These are the ones "we store in heaven". These are the ones "we store in our hearts". These are our own riches, joys and blessings but also our sacrifices to God, our sufferings, our privations, our fasting, our almsgiving, and any works of mercy (feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the prisoners, bury the dead).

I hope you all have had a wonderful time with your family and friends at Christmas and New Year. If you have not yet begun to read the book we gave you at Christmas, you still have plenty of time. Our book discussion this year will take place on the last day of January: 7 pm THURSDAY JANUARY 30. It is an easy read: only 120 pages easily divided in 25 chapters (about 4 pages each). Each chapter covers one Saint and one question. You can read the chapters in any order. Come to the discussion meeting and share which Saint or which question has touched your heart. We are all called to sainthood. One way to join the saints in heaven is to be inspired by their own lives...

May the magi and all the saints inspire all of us to come and worship God with joy and solemnity!

One in Christ,  
Fr. Alain

