

## **Wisdom from the Journey**

Epiphany of the Lord (Year A)

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Fr. Tony Davis

If you like technology, living in the 21st century is a good place to be. Within the past few decades, we have seen the rapid development of computers, video game systems, smart phones, the internet, wikipedia, bluetooth, streaming services, and many other technological advances. All of these gadgets and devices bring a wealth of knowledge to our fingertips.

One of our greatest temptations as a modern society in this regard, though, is to look back on all previous centuries as if the people then were uneducated, simple, or backward. While we probably got many centuries beat on knowledge, they probably got us beat on wisdom.

Today, we celebrate Epiphany, the appearance of the wise men at the house in which Mary and Jesus were staying. As we were told, these wise men came from the East to do Jesus homage. They followed the star and upon arriving were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. They fell prostrate, opened their treasures, and gave him the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

There is a difference between knowledge (which we have a lot of) and wisdom (which previous ages, like the wise men from the East, had a lot of). Knowledge is about accumulating information by bringing it to us as quickly and easily as possible. It answers the 'what' questions. People who seek knowledge want to have the right answers. Wisdom, on the other hand, is different. It is not about bringing information to us, but about going out to find the true meaning of life. It asks the 'why' and 'how'

questions. It is not just about what to see, but how to see; not just about what to believe, but why to believe.

For wisdom, going out to ask the right questions is more important than already thinking we have all the answers. Like the wise men in today's Gospel, people seeking wisdom are willing to go on a journey, leave the familiar behind, and travel far and wide to find the truth. These wise men didn't know exactly where they were going beforehand, but they set out on the journey, followed the star, and found their way one step at a time. In fact, many people in past centuries were wise because they, too, went out on a journey.

In our technological age today, we could use a lot more wise men and wise women. As Franciscan priest Fr. Richard Rohr says, "for far too many people, no life journey is necessary because we think we already have all our answers at the beginning." (*The Naked Now*, 17) Having a lot of knowledge and advanced technology in this sense is actually an obstacle to wisdom. It is an arrogant standing still and a refusal to develop the more important parts of our lives.

*Wisdom comes not from having knowledge, but from the willingness to go out on a journey.*

Do I seek wisdom or just knowledge?

Journeys can be frightening. They take us out of our comfort zones, put us at risk, and demand a lot of time and energy. But it was by going on a journey that the wise men found the Lord. It is by going on a journey that we find wisdom.