

**Did you know that today is the Winter Solstice?
Here in the Northern hemisphere, the winter solstice
is the shortest day of the year...
we have just 9 hours and 8 minutes of daytime today...
So, we could moan and groan, but then again, what good would that do?
or we could take a clue from the 3 Wise men and go out to look at the stars...**

**When was the last time you did that?
When was the last time you stopped long enough to look up at the night sky
found yourself swept up and away by wonder?**

**From the beginning of time,
people have been fascinated with the lights of the night sky....
When the ancient people looked up they saw the stars forming patterns
and they gave these patterns names like Cassiopeia, Orion and Pleiades....
Seafaring folk have always used the stars for
navigating the miles of endless ocean,**

**Stars tickle our imagination,
excite our curiosity,
invite us to look beyond our self so that we might know
that we are connected to something larger than ourselves.**

**The star that led the Magi to the new borne babe
announced an event of cosmic significance!
And they wanted to be a part of it!
They would do what needed to be done
because they couldn't resist the urging of their hearts...**

They undertook the dangerous journey because they

believed there was something so important they just couldn't stay home....

They followed their hopes and their dreams,

by following a star and it did lead them to what they sought...

but in a most unlikely place!

The newborn king of the Jews wasn't born in a palace in a big important city

but in a stable, or cave, in the middle of nowhere!

and I have to wonder.... were the Magi surprised??

did they think to themselves: "can this be? is this really true"???

They had risked much, they had given up much

and now they found themselves in a place that they

never imagined in their wildest dreams!

And what did they do?

They knelt down offered the best they had.

They did not protest...

They did not resist...

They didn't turn around and go back thinking they had made a mistake.

They kept their eyes and their hearts and their minds open and

they recognized that what they had sought was

indeed, lying in the manger...

So what is it about the Magi's journey

that offers us guidance and wisdom,

in our day and our time?

Well, I believe that this story offers us several nuggets of wisdom..

Wisdom nugget # 1:

**The Magi believed that the stars were there to guide them,
so they went outside that night seeking their divine wisdom.**

What if they didn't believe the stars could guide them?

**What if they didn't believe there was a cosmic wisdom that was offered to
human beings through the night sky?**

If they didn't believe, we would not be pondering their quest tonight!

**So, first and foremost the Magi had to make a decision not only to look for
Divine Guidance but to trust it when they recognized it.
and so must we.**

Are we willing to seek God's guidance us in our life's journey?

**Are we keeping our eyes, ears and our hearts wide open so that we can
recognize when the Holy One shows up?**

**Are we willing to trust the Spirit's guidance and
acknowledge that our limited human knowledge
can not possibly know the big, cosmic picture?**

Wisdom nugget #2 :

**The Magi were willing to leave the comforts and familiarity
of their home town and start out on an uncharted journey
not really knowing where they were going!...**

**I would be willing to bet that they thought would find
the newborn King of the Jews in Jerusalem.**

That would have been the logical place for the New King to be born.

But when they got to Jerusalem they were sent out of Jerusalem—

Keep going...you are not there yet!

**and they were willing to Let go of what they had expected
and were willing to be led further into the darkness.**

This must be true for us as well....

Often we think we know where we are going...
at least most of the time we know where we want to go..
we have a pretty good idea of what we want to happen.
A lot of us work hard trying to reach a goal,
perhaps even thinking we've earned it....
but the Magi's journey tells us that sometimes
we have to be willing to let all of that go,
to move on trusting that we will be led to the right place
even when darkness surrounds us.

As Joseph Campbell once said:

“We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned,
so as to have the life that is waiting for us.”

Wisdom nugget #3:

When the star finally stopped,
they knew they were in the right spot because
they were overwhelmed with joy!

Teilhard de Chardin once noted:

the most infallible sign of the presence of God is joy!
Teilhard and the Magi knew something in common!

In our own life's journey

we do have a guiding star but it is in our hearts
not up in the heavens, way far away....

To trust this star we will need to do as the Magi did:

We will have to be on the lookout for God's presence...
we will have to be willing to let go

**of what we think we are going to find
and where we are going find it
and we will have to be alert for the presence of deep and overwhelming joy**

**When we desire to participate in something bigger than ourselves,
when we want to be a part of God's cosmic adventure
we had better be prepared for surprises!**

Now, I know we are all super busy these day!...

but, tonight IS the longest night of the year...

**(Yes I know it is going to be cloudy but the stars *are* there,
just on the other side of those clouds...)**

So may I invite you to step outside tonight,

on your front porch...in your back yard...

take a deep breath...

and then use your imagination to see the stars that are ...

**they are a symbol for the Divine Wisdom and Presence that is
really there inside of you!**

Perhaps God's presence is clouded over like our stars tonight...

**but trust that it is there....shining brightly waiting for you to follow so that it
can lead you to find love being born once again...**

Because when you follow, you will find...

and when you find, you will be able to nothing else

but whisper thank you! Amen.