

**Matt. 2: 1-12**

**In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,  
wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking,  
'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?  
For we observed his star at its rising,  
and have come to pay him homage.'**  
**When King Herod heard this, he was frightened,  
and all of Jerusalem with him;  
and calling together all the chief priests and  
scribes of the people, he inquired of them  
where the Messiah was to be born.**

**They told him,  
'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:  
And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'**

**Then Herod secretly called for wise men and learned from them  
the exact time when the star had appeared.  
Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,  
'Go and search diligently for the child;  
and when you have found him, bring me word,  
so that I may also go and pay him homage.**

**When they had heard the king, they set out;  
and there, ahead of them,  
went the star that they had seen at its rising,**

**until it stopped over the place where the child was.**

**When they saw that the star had stopped,  
they were overwhelmed with joy.**

**On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother;  
and they knelt down and paid him homage.**

**Then, opening their treasure-chests,  
they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

**And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,  
they left for their own country by another road.**

### **Meditation**

**Did you know that this Thursday is the Winter Solstice?**

**Here in the Northern hemisphere,**

**the winter solstice is the shortest day of the year...**

**we will have just 9 hours, 7 minutes and 46 seconds of daylight that day...**

**So, we could moan and groan, but then again, what good would that do?**

**or we could take a clue from the 3 Magi 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,**

by curiosity, by a sense of urgency?

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 a dangerous journey because they

believed there was something so important

that they couldn't remain in the safety of their homes....

They followed their hopes and their dreams,

by following a star and it 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 perhaps cave, out 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 so much, they had given up so much  
and now they found themselves in a place that they  
could have never imagined in their wildest dreams!**

**And what did they do?**

**They kept their eyes, their minds and their hearts  
wide open and they recognized that what they had sought was  
indeed, lying in the manger...**

**and so they knelt down offered the best they had:**

**God, Frankincense and Myrrh...**

**So what does that all have to do with us?**

**Well, I believe there are several things we can take from this story  
to offer us guidance in our own lives in this 21<sup>st</sup> century..**

**# 1:**

**The Magi believed that the stars were there to guide them,  
so they had been watching...looking...paying attention...**

**What if they didn't go out that night?**

**What if they didn't believe God wanted to help people find their way  
through life?**

**If they didn't believe, we would not be pondering their quest this day!**

**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 acknowledge that with only our limited human knowledge can not possibly know the big, cosmic picture and so we must look for and trust Spirit's guidance?

#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!

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..

and I would suspect most of us have a pretty good idea

of what we want to happen when we get there.

But the Magi's journey tells us that *sometimes*

we have to be willing to let go of our expectations

and we have to be willing to be led through the darkness,

and to trust the guidance of Divine Wisdom.

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.”

**#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, Thursday night is the longest night of the year...**

**So on Thursday, may I invite you to step outside tonight,**

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

**take a deep breath...**

**and look up at the stars that are there, even if they are hidden behind the clouds...**

**and then...take another deep breath and turn your vision inward...**

**See God's guiding light deep within yourself...**

**You have...we all have...have the Divine Light inside of us...**

**and so may we trust this radiant light to lead us and guide us.....**

**For when we follow Holy Wisdom...**

**we will find Love born once again in our day....**

**in this time and in this place...**

**and when we find Love in the most unexpected places we will be able to do nothing else but kneel down and whisper: thank you! Amen.**