

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

At one time or another, most of us have had epiphanies, those AH-HA moments, when something that was in question becomes crystal clear. It could be a sudden, powerful understanding of a vexing problem. It might be a realization of a path to be followed; or an insight into a relationship that has been troubling.

However, when we speak of the Epiphany of the Lord we are talking about that great moment in history when God is revealed to the whole world in flesh.

Biblical commentators have often compared the two revelations of Christ, first to the shepherds and then to the Magi. According to their understanding the revelation to the shepherds represents Christ making Himself known first to the poor or common, every-day people. The revelation to the Magi, according to their lights, represents Him making Himself known to the wise, the rich, and the powerful who, despite their exalted positions, must likewise bow low before Him.

Likewise, the gifts that the Magi bring are seen as symbolic—the gold in honor of His kingship; the frankincense representing his priesthood, and the myrrh representing his sacrificial death.

While these musings are somewhat interesting, what fascinates me about this Epiphany of the Lord are the persons of the Magi. Magi, merely being the plural of the Latin “Magis” which means great persons, suggests whoever they were, they were important; important enough to gain an audience with King Herod. Coming from the East, they could have come from as close as Jordan or Syria; or as far as from Turkey and China.

What is important, they came from a distance looking for Jesus, led by a star to guide them, to a land that they expected had revealed in the birth of a newborn King. Instead they found a paranoid occupier-king and a people totally ignorant of His presence, who could only surmise of his possibility through legends, passed down by word of mouth.

Trusting their instincts, these Magi traveled on still following a star, and now a legend. Their faith was rewarded. The Gospel says, “The star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother.” Interesting, after they did Him homage and presented their gifts, the Magi again trusted their dreams, their instincts, and returned home by another route.

As we begin this New Year, it’s worth noting that the entire Christmas tableau is driven by God in dreams and visions, those of Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna, shepherds and magi. Knowing that we have a Savior whose Name is Jesus, who is Emmanuel, God who is with us, and that His Spirit dwells within us, makes us Magi (very important persons) to. Might this all not give us the courage to trust our instincts, follow our dreams, seek our star and go where it

leads us? Too many of us settle for where we are in life, when God is calling us to come out of our comfort zones and seek the fullness of life He wants for us.

May these seekers and visionaries of this Christmas lead us to seek more; learn more; try more; give more; be more; and become more of all that God wants us to be. In this New Year, dare to be happy; dare to be your best self; dare to be the person God created you to become. This is God's Will for you! HAPPY NEW YEAR!