

Epiphany of our Lord-2022 (Let all nations see the Salvation!) Historians, astronomers and Bible scholars have engaged in long debates about the Epiphany story. Did it actually happen? Was there really a star that led the magi-the three kings from the East? The debate will go on forever as there are no simple answers. But it would be more fruitful to focus on what the story is telling us as its message.

If you ever visit Cologne (Köln) Cathedral in Germany, you can find behind the main altar, a large reliquary said to contain the bones of the three wise men. “How did they get to Cologne?”, you might ask.

The wise men’s bones are said to have been located in Persia and then brought to Constantinople by St. Helena, the mother of the emperor Constantine. The bones were transferred from Constantinople to Milan in the fifth century and to Cologne in 1163. So not only did the wise men journey *during their lives* but even after death, their relics went on a journey.

Even though the special star of the East was risen for all people, only the three wise men could grasp the divine message behind it. God sends his signs of salvation into the life of each person. In the midst of our busy lives, let’s not miss those signs in life. The wisemen could get the message because they were in silence and prayer, seeking God’s mysteries.

*What is the focal point of this: the physical journey the wise men made to Bethlehem was **not the only** journey they made. They also made **a journey in their hearts from paganism to worshipping Jesus.*** They were not Jews; scholars tell us they were priests of an Eastern religion who consulted the stars. Possibly they could be followers of some kind of pagan religion. Though before they set out on their

journey to Bethlehem, *they were star-readers, they went on an interior journey from reading stars to worshipping Jesus as Savior.*

There are many among Christians also, who keep on consulting stars, horoscope etc. to ascertain fortune and safe future. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Consulting horoscope, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens, etc. contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone.”

The three gifts of the wise men are symbolic of what the child represents: **Gold** is a gift given to kings, and it points to the **kingship** of Jesus: **frankincense** refers to his **divinity** and **Myrrh** points to his **humanity-mortality**, as it is a sign of suffering and death.

The wise men went on a journey to Jesus, a journey within themselves. How have you responded to the message of the magi? We are called to allow Jesus be Lord of our lives, not just when it suits us. We each have a journey to make to Jesus, because none of us is yet fully converted and each of us has corners in our hearts and lives in need of Jesus’ healing and redemption. Like the wise men, we too need to rely on the grace of God to lead us to the light of Jesus our Savior.

Finally, the message of Epiphany is the *unity and universality of God’s grace*. It is not anymore reserved to the Jews,-the chosen people of God alone!, but open to all nations and all peoples. Sometimes, darkness seems to cover the earth, and hope can seem an illusion. But God’s light continues to enter the world to push back the darkness. *We need to pray that all nations may come to know that Jesus is the one Savior, that all nations may fall prostrate before Jesus. Let’s work together and pray that human fear, selfishness and violence may not undo God’s work of salvation in today’s world.* Happy Feast of Epiphany! (Fr. James Chitteth CFIC)