

The Epiphany of the Lord

Is 60:1-6

Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

Mt 2:1-12

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Restless Journey to God

The Christmas season is a heavy travel season, as we have just witnessed recently. If you have traveled far distances by car, there are stops along the way such as the need to get gas and food, to stop at rest areas; not to mention traffic in our freeways. If you traveled by train, there can be delays, especially if the incoming train arrived late and so the outbound train, for instance the Amtrak train from here in San Diego to Los Angeles, will depart late as well. The recent winter storms in the Midwest delayed and even cancelled several flights, especially in Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, which is a major hub for connecting flights to other cities in the Midwest.

Travel is definitely a test of patience; we encounter all sorts of possible snags including traffic, stopovers, the weather, delays, and so forth. But what's the point of our travels? It's obviously to be with the people we love and care about and to spend some time with them – our families, friends and relatives. In today's Gospel according to St. Matthew, we hear of three wise men who traveled by camel and on foot from the East to Bethlehem. Imagine - this journey took several days if not weeks. These men weren't even Israelites; they were foreigners. They most likely have read and discussed the prophecies and were anxious to see when this King of Israel, this Messiah would appear. God led them by means of an extraordinary star across the desert to the little town of Bethlehem where Jesus was born. In their thirst for the knowledge of God, they willingly left their home and country to pursue that quest. In their diligent search, they were led to the source of true knowledge – Jesus Christ, the Light and Wisdom of God. When they found the newborn king they humbly worshiped him and gave him gifts fitting for a king.

The travels of the wise men were both a physical journey as well as a journey of faith. All of us are in a journey - to experience life, to find out what our lives are really all about, and in that process, to find God in our lives at the same time. There is that search for a higher being, a worthwhile cause that is beyond our lives and this cause is God's Kingdom.

In our journeys, we will all experience joys, successes, failures, trials and difficulties. That's just part of our lives and we simply have to accept these as part of God's work in us. St. Augustine says in his book, the *Confessions*, "You have made us

for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” As we all know, any physical travel is really exhausting. The spiritual journey, the journey of faith, is equally exhausting. We will only find true peace and rest in eternal life with God.

With all the ups and downs of our lives, we must simply continue with our journeys – to love God, to love each other, to forgive one another, to care for those who are poor and needy and to support one another. This is where faith, hope and love kick in. We must hang in there, be patient with life’s difficulties and persevere in our search for God, just like the three wise men. Know that God gives us a star to light our pilgrim way, to guide us in our lives. God also gives us our guardian angels to guide and protect us.

And whenever we find God in lives, through Jesus Christ, we must always remember to thank Him, to praise and worship God. We must always thank God for the many gifts and blessings He has given us in our lives. Then, like the three wise men who offered Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, we offer our gifts – the gifts of ourselves, our work, our families, our service to the Church and so on – we offer all these gifts back to God.