

Following the Star to a New Solution  
Epiphany A 2008  
Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. Isaiah 60:1

### **If the Magi Were Women...what would have been different?**

If there had been three wise WOMEN instead of three wise MEN,

The three wise WOMEN would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the Baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and given practical gifts. They may have also told Joseph to wait outside seeing that he had nothing to do with a delivery.

Happy New Year! Finding a solution that meets our needs when others have failed can be a great start to a new year! Fog can reduce visibility as it did today. When visibility on the highway of life is 20 to 30 feet in front of us we need to slow down and focus on the light ahead of us. We need a divine compass to navigate our way to find the true solutions to our needs.

The First Arrival. On Epiphany the light has come. The arrival of the Magi, astrologers and philosophers probably of Persian origin brings the beginning of a religious awakening on a global scale. People that are searching for a solution to a puzzle in their lives arrive at their destination.

The divine compass may not always lead us in a straight line. The Magi made a pit stop at King Herod's place to get directions and he was helpful in their search. Why? Because he consulted his advisors: the chief priests and the scribes. Yet panic ruled the day in Herod's house. He should have welcomed such a child rather than be threatened. Paranoia sets in when there are no solutions. All Herod could offer was "let me know what you find."

The Magi were determined to get to the end of their journey. With the knowledge of Bethlehem as the city where Messiah would be born they kept going. They were motivated by the stars, by the scriptures they had heard, and their faith was rewarded. When they reached Jesus he may have been close two years old. This suggests their

dogged commitment to following their dream and their hope. What does this say to you, to our church, in the pursuit of a new solution to accomplish our mission?

The Search. Searches take time. They may take some time as we look for directions, understand solutions and follow the signs given to light our way. In the case of the Magi, a star shone and became a light and a path to their final destination. The directions given by Herod were not enough. They needed a divine compass to find their way. What directions have already been given to you as you travel the road through 2008? What new light has been shed on your situation? The Psalmist of Psalm 19 has said, "Your word O Lord is a light for my path and a lamp for my feet."

The Deception. Be aware of who it is we ask for guidance in our search for answers. In the hunger for truth there are many pitfalls and curves that may indeed be duplicitous. Those quick to give advice may be self serving only wanting a return for your good idea. Be on guard! The information may be good if it is from a number of sources. If advice is given in secret however, it may be a trap. The wise ones were warned about Herod's trap. They heeded the dream and were led to safety. The road to Herod led them to Jesus, the road to Jesus led them another way back home. Yes, the Magi were truly wise. A better way was given them by God.

The Worship. Upon their second arrival they saw the child Jesus with his mother. They gave him far more than chests of gold, frankincense and myrrh. "And they knelt down and paid him homage (worship)." It was an "aha" experience. They had found what they were looking for. Their search for "the child born king of the Jews" was successful. The idea here goes beyond an earthly king, one that transcended a paranoid trying to protect his turf like Herod. These learned men from the East saw the child as one who would be their king and ruler as well.

The Departure. There comes a time when we must go home after finding our answer, our solution. It would be great if we could just stay and worship. Hanging around under the stars is more fun than living out the solution. It would be similar to staying at a concert in a beautiful park where we made new friends and could get away from

the testing of life. The dream can't be lived out that way. The child we worship must grow up and we must give room to him to become an adult. Likewise, the wise men needed to live out their worship and tell the story of the Christ.

The story of our search for light for a new solution to our situation is the story of our journey in baptism. When we were young others made a commitment for us. They came to believe that the Christ child grew up, died and rose again. And through the water of baptism Adam and Shalamar Trotter give their sons Jaiden and Merick to buried and symbolically drowned in the water, buried with Christ. But they do so believing that their sons will be raised with Christ in his resurrection.

We also renew our vows today. So let us join ourselves with those who come and enter on our journey toward the light! Amen.