

The Magi Adore Jesus

Grace: Pray for the grace to better know and understand Jesus so that your love for Jesus will grow and your desire to imitate him will increase.

Introduction:

You have witnessed God's tender response to human need, the birth of Jesus. This small child gathers a great deal of attention. There is a certain irony to the visit by the magi. What has changed that this apparently insignificant child who could not find a bed or room in which to be born is now the recipient of gifts worthy of a king?

Imagine what it would be like to be one of the magi. What did you discuss with the other wise men along the way? As you traveled, how was the weather? In the evening, when you stopped for rest, what did you do for entertainment?

What did you eat? As you learn to place yourself into the scene, try to fill in as much detail as possible. Later, as you review your experience you may be surprised by some unique insights that those details reveal. Ask the Holy Spirit to help guide your contemplation.

When you arrive and see Jesus, how do you introduce yourself? How do Mary and Joseph receive you? Do they say anything to you? What feelings come to mind as you see Mary, Joseph, and Jesus? How does Jesus respond to your presence? Do Mary and Joseph allow you to hold and play with Jesus? What do you have to offer to Jesus? Does Jesus notice the gifts? What does Jesus have to offer you?

As a good scientist, you set out on your mission; however, something happens after you see this child. Initially you were instructed to report back to Herod; however, your allegiance seems to have changed. What will happen to you if Herod finds out that you have decided not to return and report to him where Jesus is?

Take your time praying with this passage. Underline key words or phrases that stand out to you. Allow the story to develop so that the details can become more vivid and the experience more real.



Matthew 2:1-12 The Visit of the Magi - Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'" Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him." After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshipped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.



Because once someone dared
To want you,
I know that we, too, may want you.

When gold is in the mountain
And we've ravaged the depths
Till we've given up digging.

It will be brought forth into day
By the river that mines
The silences of stone.

Even when we don't desire it,
God is ripening.
--Rainer Maria Rilke

In these or similar words ... I put myself in the place of one of the three magi who were traveling since they are the ones most prominently featured in the scripture. I am scanning the night sky with a jewel encrusted telescope and mapping out the night sky on a piece of papyrus like parchment. Suddenly I notice a star that is substantially bigger and brighter than any other stars in the sky, almost as bright as the moon. Looking right at it is almost blinding. I rush to my companions to show off my discovery. We are all stunned and in awe at the sight of this celestial spectacle. Something inside me, though I don't know what exactly, tells me this is the star of the King of Kings. I tell of my premonition to my colleagues who too share the same feeling with me. My companions and myself pack up some food and other necessities on to our finest dromedaries and head out in the direction of the star. It calls to me and invigorates me with a desire like none that I have ever felt before. Along the way my companions and I decide to stop in Jerusalem to rest and sleep up since the star is most visible during the night and it is now day. While stopping there, our presence is made known to King Herod who invites us to his palace. He inquires as to the reason of my quest and I told him with much enthusiasm of the star's appearance and what it meant. He seems to be equally as excited although a I have a strange feeling about him. He asks if upon our return trip I would stop by and tell him were the king is so that he can also pay him homage. The strange feeling grips me but I still agree to it and my friends and I start out again. The star shines as bright as ever and I gravitate to it. My friends and I approach Bethlehem and the star appears to hover right over the small town. I can feel in my soul that the king is in this small town and so my companions and I begin combing the city to find the king. We check all of the inns, every house but get nothing. Then we finally got a lead at the last inn in town. The owner tells us that he doesn't know anything about a king but when we mentioned that the king had just been born he told us about a young woman and a man who appeared to be her husband, who he had had to turn away, were in the cave-like stable behind the inn. I run outside as I learn this and pull my camel over behind the inn. There, in the light of the star, lies the cave stable, the star stopped right above it. There is a small fire and a young woman and older man in there and they have a small child with them! I approach them and tell them of me and my companions' journey to this town and ask to see the child. My friends bring out their gifts of incense and myrrh and present them to the child while kneeling down before him. I too pull out my gift of gold and am almost moved to tears as I kneel there before the child who I somehow know will die for my errors. This has been revealed to me and I tell the mother that this child is very special. She looks back into my eyes and I see in them that she too knows of his miraculous destiny. All who are present in the stable at this moment know that the child will grow up and change the world. After this encounter I lead my friends out of the stable and we wish the family the best as we start back. I discuss the feelings of awe and sadness and love that I felt around the child. My friends too felt this and we all agreed that we had just witnessed more than just a king. As I slept that night, my dreams were filled with violent images of the family being tortured and attacked and the child slaughtered. I wake suddenly and so do my friends. The strange feeling that I had back when visiting Herod returns and we all agree that we should not pass through Jerusalem on our way home. I return to my home and tell all people of the King who will change the world through His love.

Practicing What You Preach ... To better understand the joy of celebrating Jesus' birth, attend a birthday party. Spend some extra time in selecting a gift that is meaningful for the person. Reflect on how you communicate that someone is especially important to you. Like the Magi, you can show Jesus that you adore Him by spending some time with Him in Eucharistic Adoration.

