

Reflection for the Week: January 3rd- 10th 2021

Seekers from the East

The wise men seek the child that has been born in Bethlehem- a child of significance according to their readings of the stars. On this long, dangerous and expensive journey these seekers from the East are forced to take risks and stand resolute in their faith. How often did they doubt their purpose, I wonder? And were they pagans, eastern mystics or God-fearers? We don't know, but we do know that they were powerfully motivated to undertake this journey – you could say, inspired. Their divine inspiration also extended to warnings through dreams.

Clearly, these people were open to God and when they reached the house of the Holy Family, it could only have been divine inspiration that led them to worship the child; a child who probably looked like an ordinary child in an ordinary house with an ordinary family, and yet they paid homage to the child and presented him with lavish gifts that spoke of his future kingly ministry.

Every year when I read this account, I think of the humility of the seekers and their amazing confidence in God – by whatever name they knew God. Encapsulated in these 12 verses we have the message that Christ is for all – all nations, all peoples – and that an encounter with Christ transforms lives and brings people closer to the heart of God.

At the end of T.S. Eliot's famous poem, *The Journey of the Magi*, it says:

*'This: were we led all that way for Birth or Death?
There was a birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.'*

In the same way, through worshipping Christ in humble adoration our lives also find centre and purpose. When the Christ is made manifest to us there is no return to the old dispensation.

To reflect: As we embark on the journey into 2021, is there something you feel you are being called to pursue that will test and deepen your faith?