

Follow That Star



We all like to make a journey. Many of you have been making journeys at Christmas Time. Children travel to see grandparents—grandparents journey to hug their grandchildren. Some travel great distances, spending days on the road; others hop on a plane, and their journey is over in hours. But all journeys are the same in one respect. There is a beginning, a middle, and an end. Bev and I journeyed up and over the snow clogged Coquihalla and down to Vancouver to be here for the Baptism of little Cassandra. And then tomorrow, we start another journey

from here to southern California where I will be a parish priest for 4 months in the diocese of San Diego.

Well, many centuries ago, a group of astronomer/astrologers in Persia were planning another journey. These scientists of their day, whom today we call the Wise Men, had seen a certain conjunction of planets which they believed meant that something significant had happened on the earth. They were gentiles, pagans if you wish, from Persia; but their interest was piqued when they looked into the night sky and saw a wondrous sight. What they saw was a conjunction of planets, Jupiter and Saturn, in the area of the sky called Pisces. Now according to their astrological charts, Jupiter symbolized Kingship, Saturn symbolized God, and Pisces was the area of the sky reserved for Israel. To them, this meant that a King who was in some way Divine had been born in Israel. Note that this was not one shining star, as artists have interpreted it down through the centuries, but a conjunction of planets that would keep moving together, and then apart, and then together again. And when they checked out the Old Testament prophecies, they would have realized that the Jews were expecting a Messiah, who would be a King, and who would bring freedom and new life to them all.

There was only one thing for them to do—they decided to journey to Israel and check it out. If it was true, they would bring Gifts to this newborn King. And in time they would report back to their fellow astronomers what they had found.

So, after months of preparation, these Wise Men set out on a journey to find the Christ Child. Their journey had a beginning in their decision to follow That Star, a travel which was long and dangerous, and an end when they entered the House in Bethlehem and knelt before Jesus. There, kneeling before Him, they offered their gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. It was the journey of a lifetime, and one they would remember for the rest of their lives. Other Wise Men like them had journeyed to visit Kings and Emperors. But this journey by these Wise Men was to kneel before the Son of God—the God who was visiting this planet and had taken on the flesh and blood of men. At no other time in human history had such a journey been made with such an ending. We call this moment in time—

Epiphany—because the Light of Christ was being spread out to everyone, even gentiles like them, and like us.

We too are on a journey—our journey of Life. We too had a beginning, our Baptism. Like Cassandra will today, we also had a spiritual Birth, when God adopted us in the water of Baptism, and anointed us with His Holy Spirit, to begin our journey of Life. Cassandra today is becoming a child of God, a sister to Jesus, and like us, a full member of His Holy Catholic Church. This Baptism is the beginning of her spiritual life, and though there is much yet to happen, today she becomes a Christian. With her Baptism, her journey towards the heart of God begins. In time, like us, she will come to Faith in Christ as her Saviour and will kneel before Him as her Lord. In time, she will learn the Catholic Faith, and will grow in Grace into an adult Christian. Her journey in the Faith will take her through many ups and downs in her Christian Life. She will face temptation, she will fall into sin, she will find forgiveness, and go on to share what she has and knows with others. We know all this, because we ourselves are on our journey of Faith, a journey that we live each day, as we move closer to our destiny in Jesus. True, we each have a long way to go, but we are not alone—Jesus walks with us—He is our Pioneer, showing us the way on our journey. And our goal is to become the beautiful and strong people of God, the ministers of God to this needy and dissolute world. Jesus calls us onwards in our journey—Jesus feeds us with the Blessed Sacrament each Sunday as food for our journey. Jesus reaches out to each of us when we slip and fall or wander from the path. He is there to lift us up, to restore us, to bring forgiveness and new life for those who journey on. And not only that, but we the Church are here to encourage each other, to share with each other, to journey together, supporting one another.

The Wise Men had a goal, and so do we. Our goal is to become the Saints of God, to bit by bit, grow more like Jesus, so that He can live in us, and we in Him. Each day we follow our Star each day growing closer to God almighty, to find our very place in the Kingdom of Heaven and the Heart of God.

Today, Cassandra has her Birth, her start in this journey of Life. The Star she will follow is Jesus Christ Himself. She is surrounded today by us, her Brothers and Sisters in Christ. It is we who will teach her the Faith; we who will help her on her journey. Why? Because we too are on our journey of Life, looking to Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our Faith, who with our hearts fixed on the Goal, as the Wise Men did long ago, of kneeling one day in adoration before Jesus our Lord, and laying before Him the Gifts of our Life. That is our journey, and our Goal.

How are you doing in your journey of Life?

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen