

Homily. Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. 2/3 January 2021.

Loving and knowing or perhaps better, caring and understanding, are like two sisters joined at the hip. If we want to really know something or someone then we can only do it lovingly and if we really want to love the thing or person then we have to put in the effort of knowing. Sundered and separated, knowing leads only to dry, hard facts without heart or care and loving leads only emotions and infatuations divorced from reality.

The men from out of the East are described as Magi, sages, wise ones. Their sagacity, their wisdom, came from keeping their desire to know and discover in harmony with their need to care and show love for the new born King. They read the skies rightly and found the star. This knowledge inflamed their love and this love impelled them across the trackless desert wastelands to King Herod the Great in Jerusalem. After attending to him they continued journeying to Bethlehem looking always to the true light above them until they arrived at their destination where the child was.

Matthew makes sure to tell us that the star they had come to know filled them with delight, a joining of their minds and hearts in trustworthy insight and heartfelt love. Having paid their homage to the infant King they cared about the dream that came to them, listened and heeded its warning and so made their way home avoiding Jerusalem and Herod with his plots and schemes. Once again, the conjunction of their knowledge and love showed its strength by bringing wisdom to these already wise men.

These sages from the East represent us and what we can be; travellers in this world who with both understanding and care come to find the Lord of Life and the Saviour of all. Our gifts might not be as regal as theirs, but

when we act in harmony with our desire to know and our need to love we are connected in deep ways to God and each other. Over time our wisdom grows and expands so that we'll be able to help those around us discern the true star from the many false lights flickering around us. This will be our service to each other, our sacrifice and offering to God.

As I said earlier, knowledge and understanding cut off from love and care is nothing but dry matter. Love and care severed from knowledge and understanding is little but wet, mushy emotionalism. Together and in concert though, wisdom grows and flourishes, the Divine sort of wisdom leading us to see the right star, grasp its meaning and follow it faithfully to its destination, the place where Jesus is found.

If we can remember this Epiphany of light for us then we'll have something valuable to offer, a treasure to share with each other in this undoubtedly challenging year that lies freshly opened before us.