

The Epiphany places before us a word that our culture finds increasingly difficult to accept: mystery. Not mystery as confusion or ignorance, but mystery as something real, radiant, and inexhaustible—something that invites us forward without surrendering itself completely to our grasp.

Isaiah announces it with confidence: “Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come.” Yet the prophet is honest as well. Darkness still covers the earth. Thick clouds still hover over the peoples. Light does not erase the night all at once; it pierces it. Epiphany reminds us that God reveals himself not by eliminating mystery, but by inviting us into it.

St. Paul names this explicitly in the second reading. He speaks of “the mystery made known by revelation.” A mystery is not a puzzle to be solved but a truth to be received. The heart of the Gospel—that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, sharers in the promise of Christ—was not discovered through superior reasoning or human insight. It was revealed. And revelation always requires faith.

This is where the Epiphany confronts one of the quiet temptations of our age: the belief that if we are intelligent enough, informed enough, or reflective enough, we can master the meaning of life on our own. We are formed, often without realizing it, by a confidence in reason that slowly becomes an idol—a presumption that we know better than God, or at least that God must explain himself on our terms.

But faith does not begin with answers. Faith begins with reverent openness.

The Magi embody this posture beautifully. They are called wise, not because they possess all knowledge, but because they know how to seek. They do not worship their own intelligence; they allow it to be led, and they follow where their faith, symbolized by the star, leads them, even though the path is uncertain, costly, and long.

Notice how much of their journey is marked by not knowing. They do not know exactly where the star will take them. They do not know how long the journey will last. They do not know what they will find when they arrive. And when they reach Jerusalem, they briefly lose sight of the star altogether. Yet they keep going. Their wisdom lies not in control, but in fidelity.

Herod, by contrast, represents a very different way of living. He has power, information, efficiency, and influence. He consults experts. He knows the Scriptures. But he cannot see the star. His heart is closed. He deals in secrecy because his ambition and anxiety rule him. Where the Magi are free to wonder, Herod is trapped by fear. Where the Magi are open to mystery, Herod insists on control.

This contrast teaches us something essential: faith is necessary to see the signs God sends us. The star is not visible to everyone. It does not force itself upon the world. It

is only seen by those who remain open, those who diligently search for it.

And when the Magi finally see the star again, St. Matthew tells us they are overjoyed. Not relieved. Not triumphant. Joyful. They recognize that they are on the right path—not because all their questions have been answered, but because God has confirmed their trust.

When they arrive, the destination surprises them. No palace. No throne. No army. Just a child, with his mother. And yet, this is enough. The search ends not in explanation, but in adoration. The goal of the journey is not knowledge, but worship. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh are not payment for understanding; they are the offering of surrendered lives.

This is where Epiphany speaks directly to us. Can we sit with mystery in our own lives? Can we remain faithful when prayer does not produce immediate results? Can we persevere when the path feels unclear, when the star seems hidden, when answers do not come quickly?

Wisdom does not come from having all the answers. Wisdom comes from knowing that we do not—and trusting God anyway. The journey of faith is always a journey of commitment and resolve. It asks us to keep searching, to keep praying, to keep following, even when understanding lags behind obedience.

The good news of Epiphany is this: Jesus is always the destination. We search for him not only in the familiar places—the sacraments, the Scriptures—but also along the roads of our own lives, where mystery, struggle, and hope intermingle. If we remain faithful, the journey will not be wasted.

The Magi return home by another way. Anyone who truly encounters Christ does. May this feast teach us not to fear mystery, but to trust it. For in following the light we are given, we will be led—always—to Him.