

Seekers of Truth

There's something attractive about the glory of God. The Magi knew it. "We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." We call them saints for their devotion. But, interestingly enough, they likely died before Christ died and rose from the dead. A missionary apostle never reached them, and they were never baptized. We know little about them, their background, or their specific education. Were they truly kings? Were they learned scholars? Whatever their career, we know that they were truly wise men for their pursuit of truth and their openness to the revelation of God.

The Magi [didn't just offer gifts to the newborn Christ child, they also] offer us unique gifts. These gifts aren't tangible items. They're attitudes of the heart that can bring us to the One who brought them to Bethlehem.

The first gift is curiosity. To know that the star was a meaningful sign, the Magi needed to be inquisitive. They needed to explore the world around them, to study it, to measure it, to grow in understanding. In many ways, our perspectives are the products of the information we take in. In an era where differences form divisions, the example of the Magi teaches us to be curious about the world, whether it's economics, health care structures, parenting philosophies, the consumption of gluten, or Star Wars: The Last Jedi. Curiosity should extend to our faith as well. The Catholic Church is rich in Scripture, saints, sacraments, and more. There's always a new area to explore!

The second gift is humility. The Magi weren't Jewish. And yet when they encountered the star, its rising, and its deeper meaning in Jesus' birth, their desire was "to do him homage." The beauty of the sign attracted them. We, too, are invited to be humble before truth when we find it. Everyone has teachings of the Church that lead to questions. We all find some of our behaviors contradicting the Commandments or Beatitudes. There are certain "hard facts" of our faith that must be acknowledged and embraced with humility. Our encounters with other people – their stories, their viewpoints, their challenges – should also be approached with humble respect and dignity.

The third gift is movement. The journey from Persia to Palestine was no easy trek in the first century. The Magi's pursuit of truth meant effort and sacrifice. If we're serious about seeking truth, it will require something of us. "We cannot see Christ and remain as we are." Like the Magi, we, too, are invited to draw near to God, to walk by the light of God's truth, and to invite others to join us in gathering around the babe in Bethlehem.

By Anna Carter