

January 10, 2020  
Epiphany

## What Guides You?

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Preaching

### First Reading ~ *Matthew 2:1-12*

After the birth of Jesus, which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of King Herod, Magi, astrologers, from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage." When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed and troubled, and the whole of Jerusalem with him. Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In Bethlehem of Judea," they informed him.

"Here is what the prophet has written:

***'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,  
since from you will come a leader  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"***

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, "Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, bring me word so that I may go and offer homage, too."

After their audience with Herod, they set out. The star they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another way.

### Second Reading

~ adapted from "This Year Will Be Different", by Ann Weems in *Kneeling In Bethlehem*

Who among us does not have dreams

that this year will be different?

Who among us does not intend to go

peacefully, leisurely, carefully toward Bethlehem,

for who among us likes to cope with the

commercialism of Christmas

which lures us to tinsel not only the tree

but also our hearts?

Who among us does not yearn for  
time for our hearts to ponder the Word of God?  
moments of kneeling and bursts of song?  
the peace of quiet calm for our spirit's journey?  
This year we intend to follow the Star  
instead of the crowd.  
But, of course, we always do  
intend the best.  
(And sometimes best intentions tend to get the best of us)  
This year, when we find ourselves off the path again  
(and we invariably will!),  
let's not add yet another stress to our days.  
Instead, let's approach the birth of our Incarnation  
with joyful abandon!  
And this year let's do what Mary did and rejoice in God,  
let's do what Joseph did and listen to our dreams,  
let's do what the Magi did and go to worship,  
let's do what the shepherds did and praise  
and glorify God  
for all we've seen and heard.  
As for the frantic pace,  
we don't have time for that.  
This year will be different.