

# Gifts of the Magi

The Editor presents a reflection for the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Our main association with the Feast of the Epiphany is of the Magi bringing gifts to Mary and Joseph of precious gold, frankincense and myrrh: valuable in themselves and in what they represented.

They also bring gifts for all time, not just gold, frankincense and myrrh but the gift of their wisdom. They had a certain type of wisdom or cop-on. It was the wisdom of following their star, sent their way by God to light their path to God's Son. They would be guided by a star, and in faith they believed that the star would guide them right.

We know little about them, not even their names, though we have called them names ('Caspar', 'Melchior' and 'Balthasar'). The star brought them into unknown territory and to an unknown king. They made mistakes along the way and had to ask the way many times. Maybe there was a danger that their gifts could be robbed.

They had a dream to find this new king. Can this put us in touch with our dreams? We have many: who we would really like to be, our family dramas – at the end of her life, a mother said to her family, 'Look out for each other.' Her dream was not to leave money or a house; it was that her



family would care for and love each other. Many a normal dream is a huge gift to others.

We work for our dream. The wise men got somewhere by leaving home, leaving safety and putting sights on their dream, 'to follow that star wherever it went'. Joseph followed the Lord in following the dream sent to him by God.

Dreams can be of a good and loving marriage, a caring family, a priesthood bringing life to people, teachers really hoping to do good for their pupils, a missionary for life in a new land or for a short time; a dream



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wise guides on their way. In simple and profound ways, people may have pointed you to your star when you went a bit astray: when you drank too much, dabbled in drugs or unsatisfying relationships, or made a total goal out of money, or changed job when it was the wrong decision. Our wise guides are people who have helped us keep our dream alive, like the ones who kept the wise men on the right path and then helped them home, like the angel who said to go back a different way.

The feast is a pilgrimage feast – of the Magi and ourselves, knowing God never leaves us stuck on any road, path, lane or byway on the journey. God is always guiding us, often into new ways of responding to him. Together we are both guided and guide. From the lessons learned on the journey, we can guide others on their journeys.

May we be grateful for guides on our path, and be, as best we can, wise guides to others.

Who and what is your star?! For whom am I called to be their star?

The Feast of the Epiphany (6 January) is a holy day in Ireland.

to make our country a better place for the poor, to create a place of justice wherever we are, to face illness and death well, to help the best dreams for our younger family to come true.

Dreaming is a young activity – all we would like to be. 'Trust your dreams for in them are the seeds of eternity' (W. B. Yeats). Dreams of love, success, integrity, making a contribution to the world – worth our thought, and when older worth our remembering!

We can think on this feast of those who have been our wise guides, just as the wise men met wise and not-so-