

## Epiphany 1

Pope Francis in one of his homilies talks about the three actions the Magi undertook to reach the baby Jesus: seeing, setting out and bringing. Those three actions can guide our journey towards the Lord this year. We need the three of them. One or two are not enough. We need to see, we need to move and we need to bring ourselves. If we don't see, we don't move; if we don't move, we cannot give ourselves.

The first thing is to see the star. We ask the Lord to see, like the blind man in the Gospel, when Jesus asked him what he wanted: "Lord let me see." Maybe we need to learn how to look, how to open our eyes, be more humble. There could be an obstacle in front of us, and we should remove it. What is it that doesn't allow me to see the star? Maybe we don't even look at the sky, we don't spend time in prayer. How are we going to see it if we don't look? Other people saw the star but only the three wise men followed it. They found excuses not to follow the star. Maybe we have seen the star, we know what God wants us to do, but we are not ready. We lack generosity, spirit of detachment, or we are afraid of risking our lives. At the end of the day we need faith to trust in God. He is going to fulfill his promises; he is not going to let us down.

The second action is to set out, to go, to begin to walk, to try. We need to get out of our comfort zone. It is not going to be an easy journey. We don't know where we are going, how long it is going to last, when is the star going to stop, what obstacles we are going to find on the way. We could lose the star, change our minds, find another way. Herod was afraid of the star. Maybe we are afraid too. The priests in Jerusalem pointed out the way but they didn't follow it. We could show others the star, explain what they have to do, but we don't follow it ourselves. Maybe other people will try to discourage us to follow the star. They could tell us not to be fanatical, take it easy, relax. To begin is easy; to keep going is more difficult; to reach the end is what's important.

Our last endeavour is to bring something. When we travel we normally buy gifts to bring them back home. We cannot arrive in front of baby Jesus empty handed. The Magi brought gold, incense and myrrh. We can bring the same gifts, the gold of our own lives, in spite of being made simply of clay. Our lives turn into gold when we offer them to God. We can also bring incense, the perfume of our Christian lives, the virtues that we strive to produce; each one of them is a grain of incense, that together produces a unique scent. And myrrh, the sacrifices God is asking of us. They mixed myrrh in the drink they gave to Jesus on the cross; they also used myrrh when they buried Jesus' body. It is a gift that reminded Jesus of his passion. It was at the beginning of his life and at the end. We too have a beginning; we need to follow Jesus till the end.

The Gospel says that when the three wise men arrived, "going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother." We normally represent baby Jesus on his mother's lap; she is holding the creator of the universe. She is the seat of wisdom, the throne of glory. Mary, Miriam, means star of the sea. In the same way the sailors at sea, used to direct themselves at night looking at the stars, Mary points us the way to her son. During the storms and crises that we find in our lives, Mary is the star that brings us to a safe haven.