

Dear readers,

Our Saviour called the Magi to the crib. A star was to be their external guide. At the same time, this star enlightened them interiorly, through the light of grace, and this grace impelled them powerfully to obey its summons.

These truly wise men were faithful to the promptings of grace! Once they had seen the star and recognized God's will, immediately they prepared for their journey and left at once. Upon arriving, they proclaimed: "We have seen" - this represents preparatory grace, which enlightens and speaks to the heart - and: "We have come" - this is the ready acceptance and co-operation with grace. To know the will of God and to fulfill it immediately, this is the great virtue of the Magi. They quickly pass from recognition to desire, from desire to determination, from determination to accomplishment, never letting their own personal desires obstruct God's action. What wisdom lies concealed beneath this ready acceptance of grace!

EDITORIAL



What dangers, on the contrary, are implied in the idle neglect of grace? When God speaks, it would be an act of unfaithfulness to hesitate even for a moment. The least delay may be fraught with irreparable loss. St. Paul warns us not to miss the opportune moment: "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light" (Rom. 11:4). St. Augustine adds that there are special moments of grace: "If you hesitate, you run the risk of forfeiting it altogether. Or, are you perhaps of mind that the Lord will wait until it shall please you to accept the gifts of His love?" How many, perhaps countless, inspirations are imparted to us during our life, yet we hardly take notice. Oftentimes we can say with the Magi: "We have seen the star," but dare not add, "and we have followed the call."

The example of the Magi puts many lukewarm, indifferent faithful to shame. We Christians offer stubborn resistance to the promptings of the Holy Spirit while these pagan kings obey without hesitation! Many of us lag behind in our indifference, while we should and could be making rapid strides in perfection.

Great difficulties were encountered by the Magi on their way to Behlehem. They had to overcome many obstacles and brave many dangers. The star led them into a strange country, and when they believed themselves to be at their destination, it suddenly disappeared. Neither Herod nor the inhabitants of Jerusalem could give them the desired information concerning the newborn King of the Jews. This trial, however, neither shattered their courage nor caused their faith to waver. At the prompting of Jewish scholars, they humbly submitted to the prophetic mysteries revealed in Holy Scripture. Thus do noble and magnanimous souls love to act; surmounting all obstacles, they trust in God and obey his servants; they know how to bridle their own desires, to deny themselves, to suffer, to fulfill their duties, heedless of gossip. They seek God alone, and esteem all else as empty.

Do we imitate the Magi? Or do we instead grow mutinous in hours of trial? We know that these difficult hours will inevitably come. God demands the sacrifice of natural tendencies and the crucifixion of self-love. Confiding in God, we should courageously embrace these difficulties and this darkness. As soon as the honor of God and our salvation render it necessary, grace will return to assist us, just as the star reappeared for the Magi. The more sincere and humble our resignation in obscure, trying moments, the greater will be our joy upon the luminous return of God's grace.

The docility of the Magi puts us to shame. With great perseverance they followed the star and never abandoned their search for Jesus. Even when the star disappeared they continued their search with the same eagerness. We also have to be prepared and to fulfill the will of God as soon as the star of faith bids us to recognize it, without even a moment's hesitation.

May this Christmas time help us to follow faithfully the promptings of grace and to practice the virtues they inspire.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Father Jürgen Wegner