

Epiphany  
2023

Matthew  
2:1-12



# A Meeting with Prophecy

God is born in Bethlehem—even the stars indicate this. The Gospel seems to suggest that simply doing one's job with commitment is enough to begin the journey of drawing closer to Jesus. Even though the Magi take a wrong road as they travel, it turns out to be the right road because through this mistake they cross paths with the prophetic wisdom of the Bible.

Knowledge and prophecy meet in Jerusalem. The Magi are just a step away from the truth, but they can't seem to reach it. The star shines again only when they resume their journey.

We can conclude that the pursuit of truth requires not only the knowledge of the Magi and the prophecy of the wise, but that it is also a journey undertaken by lovers.

Herod does not understand this, so the star does not shine for him. He does not set out because he is too afraid, and some of his fear is legitimate.

Look at the gifts the Magi offer Jesus:  
they are three basic symbols  
of both our faith and our  
fears with regard  
to belief.

**Gold.** Gold is a gift offered to rulers. Faith enables us to recognize Jesus as the ruler of our lives. But how can one not be afraid at the sight of such a weak and fragile ruler? How can one not be afraid when it comes to believing in a defenseless ruler whose only "weapon" is mercy?

**Incense.** Incense is offered as homage to God. But how can we not feel a shiver of fear when we are told that God is a child we can hold in our arms? How can we not be afraid at the knowledge that God is so terribly human and fragile?

**Myrrh** is offered to anoint a corpse. How can we refrain from trembling at the thought of a God who will not avoid death, but instead embrace it to the full?

*We ask you, Lord,  
for to the courage to take up the scepter  
of living in an attitude of freedom.*

*Let us welcome the incense  
that opens us to the infinite,  
and the myrrh that offers us reasons for self-giving.  
We make this plea with fear, awe and trembling.*

*Fr. Alessandro Deho'*