

December 24, 2015

SERENITY AND SALVATION

Matthew 2:1-12, 13-15

We don't zero in very often on the emotional journey of the Wisemen. Our focus is on the child of Joseph and Mary, Jesus, and rightly so. After all, it's really all about Jesus. But it was because of Jesus that the Wisemen came. It was because they had seen the signs that they knew a new King had been born. It was because of this that they wanted to "*pay Him homage,*" they wanted to show reverence before the divine child. They came to worship!

There was a deep but quiet exhilaration stirring within them. And when the Star they followed led them to their ultimate destination, they were filled with an exceedingly great joy! But it was peaceful, gentle. A sort of serenity. It was not a score-in-the-end-zone sort of joy. It was a perfect, heavenly peace. Some might call it bliss, but bliss seems too exuberant. Some might call it ecstasy, but ecstasy seems too exciting, too unrestrained. It was a quiet, soothing serenity. The kind that merits a big satisfied warm sigh of gladness.

The Wisemen felt the way you might feel when you have just completed a long trip ... you're home from an adventurous vacation, and you are finally able to sit down, but then, multiply that feeling by a thousand. That is the serenity I mean. Not that it's over, but that it's complete. You did it. You succeeded in your purpose. You're done. Now you can breathe with complete satisfaction. Security. The thrill of discovery tempered by the depth of wonder, like you have just embraced the reality of a great hidden treasure: Wow! ...and Yes!

But this treasure is not hidden. This treasure is being revealed. This is a gift... For the whole world. But some in the world were not ready. The Wisemen were "*warned in a dream not to go back to Herod.*" Did something dangerous stir in their hearts? Did they feel threatened? Did the warning reveal peril? "*They returned home by another way.*" Perhaps their dream saved them!

Joseph had a dream too: *Now after the Wisemen left an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the Child and His Mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child to destroy Him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his Mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet (Hosea): "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."* (Matthew 2:13-15)

Salvation is a part of the Life of Christ even from the beginning of His story. It was a physical and practical salvation in His infancy. It is a spiritual and moral salvation that Jesus brings to us. And yet, in our moral salvation, we are also given a spiritual passion to perpetuate the grace that saves – saves children from danger, saves people from violence, saves the poor from hunger, the oppressed from abuse, and the world from evil.

And when we surrender to that grace, and participate in that salvation, there is serenity!