

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me Twelve drummers drumming.

Today, twelve days after Christmas, we celebrate the Epiphany, meaning ‘manifestation, revealing.’ The wise men come from the east, from the orient, following the light of a star. They are “oriented,” not disoriented, they are enlightened because the light of the star guides their path. In some traditions there are seven, nine, or even twelve wise men, since the Gospel does not specifically say how many they are. Our tradition of three wise men comes from the gifts which they bear; gold frankincense and myrrh. Their persons represent all the nations, all of humanity, called to recognize in the Child the manifestation of God’s love.

In the Mass of Christmas Eve, we heard the words from the Prophet Isaiah: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. The rod of their taskmasters has been shattered. Every boot trampling in battle, every cloak soaked in blood, will be burnt, because a child has been born for us.”

Darkness, fear, worry, and anxiety are dispelled because a child born for us. He came to his own, but his own people did not accept him, but all who did accept him become children of God.

The wise men, the Magi, accept him. They follow the star to find the place where he lies in a manger. This star is also present in our life, it is called faith. Faith guides us through the dark night of the soul.

Pope Francis, in a Christmas homily, reflected on these words:

“This prophecy of Isaiah never ceases to touch us, especially when we hear it proclaimed in the liturgy of Christmas night. This is not simply an emotional or sentimental matter. It moves us because it states the deep reality of what we are: a people who walk, and all around us – and within us as well – there is darkness and light. In this night, as the spirit of darkness enfolds the world, there takes place anew the event which always amazes and surprises us: the people who walk see a great light. A light which makes us reflect on this mystery: the mystery of walking and seeing.

Walking: this verb makes us reflect on the course of history, that long journey which is the history of salvation, starting with Abraham, our father in faith, whom the Lord called one day to set out, to go forth from his country toward the land which he would show him. From that time on, our identity as believers has been that of a people making its pilgrim way toward the promised land. This history has always been accompanied by the Lord! He is ever faithful to his covenant and to his promises. “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all” (1 Jn 1:5). Yet on the part of the people there are times of both light and darkness, fidelity and infidelity, obedience, and rebellion; times of being a pilgrim people and times of being a people adrift.

In our personal history too, there are both bright and dark moments, lights, and shadows. If we love God and our brothers and sisters, we walk in the light; but if our heart is closed, if we are dominated by pride, deceit, self-seeking, then darkness falls within us and around us. “Whoever hates his brother – writes the Apostle John – is in the darkness; he walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (1 Jn 2:11).

On this night, like a burst of brilliant light, there rings out the proclamation of the Apostle: ‘God’s grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race’ (Tit 2:11)”.

We are a people who are walking, traveling, like the wise men. Our life is a journey, with a beginning and an end, and we as travelers are invited to follow the light of Christ. Without this light there is disorientation. May the light of Christ accompany us on this Great Feast of the Epiphany, and remain with us during our journey in this year, 2023. Happy New Year!

Fr. Sean