

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



Where is the newborn king of the Jews?
(Matthew 2:2)

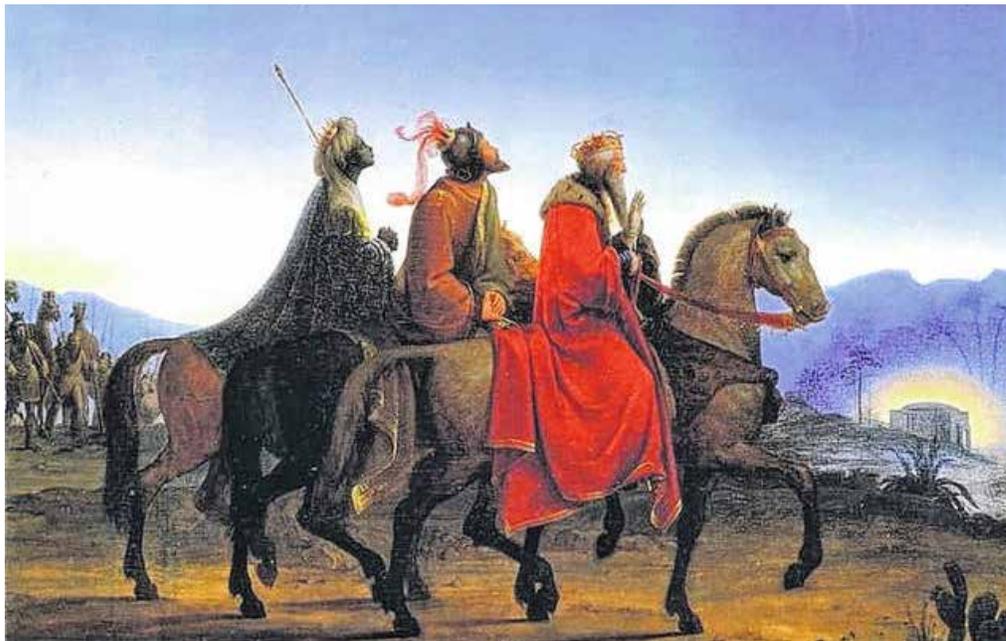
'Lord, where are you?' 'Lord, what are you calling me to do for you?' 'Lord, are you sure you have the right person?' The question of the saintly Magi, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews?" sounds quite similar to the questions that any discerner asks. Discernment is a journey of discovery. It is the journey to discover the clarity of God's call for our lives. This is not always an easy task given the numerous "voices" in the world that call out for our attention. Some of these voices mirror the voice of God reminding us of our goodness and our blessedness as children

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of God. Other voices give off messages different, and often antagonistic to the what God speaks to us. In discernment one prayerfully perfects the soul to listen to the divine voice. Prayer, meditation, spiritual direction, spiritual reading are all important tools of discernment. Using each of these tunes the ear of the soul to the divine voice. Discernment is not easy and takes time. But the time given to the

discipline of discernment only makes the discerner better able to hear the voice of God. Likewise, the process deepens one's love and hunger for God. Discernment is not only for those considering a vocation to the consecrated life or priesthood. It is for all persons of faith. All disciples of Jesus are invited by Christ to use their talents and personal gifts for the purpose that God has set for one's life. All are called to hear with clarity what the call of God is and to respond to that call. The question of the Magi is the question of every believer. In finding Christ we find ourselves and we find purposeful meaning for life.



As the process of discernment progresses, questions arise. The questions are not about what God is doing, so much as to what God desires for our life. The Magi could have not asked the question and simply prolonged the process to find the newborn king. The searching could have taken them far out of the way, possible to a different locale, never finding the holy child. In asking their question, the Magi receive the necessary information to focus their search. Their ability to ask the question led them to Bethlehem's cave where they found Him who was the reason for their



long journey. Honest discernment always lets questions arise to become a lesson in this journey of discovery.

I believe that the story of the Magi teach us three important lessons about discernment: 1) to follow God's call we must leave our comfort zone and trustingly go where He leads; 2) we need the assistance of "stars" (spiritual directors, confessors, trusted friends) to guide us in the discernment process; 3) it

a priest or religious sister or brother, campus minister, spiritual director, our family member. These trusted people are often able to listen well and guide us on the discernment path. These stars can assist in understanding what the Lord is saying in prayer. The work of discernment necessitates the accompaniment of others whose wisdom, prayer and love illumine the path.

Lastly, discernment takes faith and prayer

Reflection Questions:

1. As I read the story of the Visit of the Magi, what am I learning about God? About myself?
2. As I discern, who are the "stars" who illumine my journey? How are they assisting my discernment? What are they teaching me about the Lord?

takes faith, rooted in prayer to search for, listen to and offer the gift of ourselves to Christ.

The Magi read the ancient prophecies of the birth the newborn king. Many questions probably arose as the what the prophecies meant and if these were true. These questions lead them to trust the star and go in search of what it summoned them to witness. The Magi let their questions lead them to leave all that was familiar and go on a long and arduous journey to witness the fulfillment of the prophecies. It is easy in discernment to let the fear of the unknown or the fear of voicing our questions to hinder the process of clearly listening to the voice of the Lord. Discernment invites us to leave the comfort of what is known and trustingly enter the unknown knowing that the One who calls us is our faithful companion in the process. If the Magi had chosen to stay home and let someone else follow the star, they would have missed the profound encounter with the Lord, the newborn king. They left the comfort of home for a journey, but not alone. The star, which illumined their path, was their guide and companion.

to listen well to the Lord. The Magi had faith, even in their questions, to trust the prophecies and embark upon the journey of discovery. I believe that they prayed to the God of the Israelites to guide them to what God wanted them to see. They journeyed knowing that something great awaited them. The journey of discernment is ultimately an encounter with the Lord. In the encounter the Lord speaks to the heart His love and plans for the discernor. It takes faith to enter the encounter and prayer to listen to the heart of God. When the journey of discernment is done in faith and prayer the journey is full of the adventure of self-learning and of hearing the voice of God that speaks of love and goodness for the one who searches.

As you continue to discern the Lord's call for your life, slowly and prayerfully read Matthew 2:1-12 and invoke the intercession of the saintly Magi in the discernment of the Lord's call for your life. Let discernment be a journey of discovery of your goodness and the love of God in your life. With God you will find your way and be able to clearly hear the Lord's call for your life. Do not be afraid to respond to the Lord. We Servites are praying for you.

The journey of discernment is a blessed moment in life. But it can be scary, especially as we try to listen well to the Lord's voice. Like the Magi we need "stars" to illumine the path. The stars can be trusted friends,

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Vocation Directors

Fr Donald Siple, OSM
donaldsiple@servitesusa.org

Mr Eddie Murphy
vocations@servitesusa.org

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