

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

[Seek not after worldly comfort]

“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” (Matt. 2:2)

That was what the wise men asked king Herod.

They made a ‘Christmas journey’ to pay homage to the new king, to bring him gifts!

And conventional wisdom said the current ‘king’ could show the way.

Of course, king Herod did *not* know.

The only king Herod worshiped was the Roman Emperor—
and only when it was required of him.

Really, Herod wasn’t interested in worshiping anyone but Herod.

He wasn’t even a real king!

Herod claimed to be ‘king of the Jews’ yet wasn’t even Jewish!

Oh, he acted Jewish outwardly. Most of the time.

But he was an Edomite, whose family schemed to usurp the throne.

The magnitude of that first Christmas—when God came to earth—
was lost on this so-called ‘king of the Jews.’

Herod just wanted to enjoy the *worldly comforts*.

[God seeks all]

But these foreign “wise men,” had seen a “star” in the sky.

We don’t know whether that meant a literal star that all could see,

a “sign” in the heavens, or even something unique that God revealed only to them.

In fact, it’s likely that they were astrologers.

The Greek word used to describe these “wise men” is *μαγοι*, “Magi.”

The same root word for our English “magus,” and “magic.”

This suggests they weren’t exactly good Jewish rabbis.

(Jews were not permitted to practice “magic.” Astrology is bad! Magic was and is a sin!)

These were *magicians*, of some sort—*Christmas wizards*!

Yes, laugh! There is some ‘Divine comedy’ here:

The apparent ‘king of the Jews’ doesn’t know the actual King of the Jews,

and non-Jewish foreigners have come to worship a king that isn’t even theirs!

There is also great comfort here:

God seeks after all people, even *Christmas wizards*.

God’s love is not conditional upon how well we *outwardly* keep his commands.

It’s not found in *worldly comforts* nor deciphered through *magic*.

It's found in the Person of Jesus Christ, who welcomes all.

[Seek after the Christ who always seeks you!]

Those Magi were welcomed by the God who took on flesh and dwelt among us—

Literally, welcomed into his home! What hospitality!

Matthew tells us:

“And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother,
and they fell down and worshiped him.

Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts.” (Matt. 2:11)

They offered Him gifts fitting for a *worldly* king: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

This was a good thing to do!

Yet it reveals that even these “wise men” didn't quite understand Who this King really was—*is*.

He has no need of such gifts—they are already His!

He is Lord of all, Lord even over death!

For His Kingdom is not of this world.

No, it is not of this world, but...

It is found wherever two or more are gathered in His name,

It is found where His Word is preached, and His Grace given in the Sacraments.

It is found where love reigns over ‘worldly comfort’ and the ‘magic’ of the season.

Love is the gift our King has demonstrated for us in coming to earth,

being born as a little baby,

suffering and dying on the Cross,

and forgiving us our sins.

Love is the gift that we are to share with our neighbors.

“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?”

Love your neighbor, and you will show him!

That is *your* Christmas journey.

**Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among the people. Amen! (Psalm 96:3)**
