

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON

Change

Birthing

Begin

Flauner

Many of the star cards that we talked about last week had to do with noticing and welcoming new life -

Before we leave the Christmas season, I'd like to look at the story as a whole, metaphorically,

For it holds the deeper truth that is worth considering -

that we are all Mary,

We are all Joseph,

We are all able to welcome the Christ child into the world.

We all carry the possibility of birthing new life -

new ideas,

new projects,

new ways of serving the world.

The Divine Child grows in each of us, dwells in each of us.

All of us can open ourselves up to be blessed by the Holy Spirit and incarnate - bring God's Spirit to life into the world.

This divine new life that comes through us, from the Spirit, needs our participation.

Just as Mary, and Joseph, said Yes, welcoming the Spirit to work in their lives, We, too, must actively engage, care for this new life, tend it, and eventually adore it, as the wise ones did.

Holding new life, letting it grow within us, takes time. Sometimes a long, long time.

Waiting for the birth of new life may take a long time, but we mustn't ignore it, forget it.

That new life that grows in us, lives in us, needs to be nurtured and protected in order for Christ's light to be born through us into this world.

And when the time comes... remember,

Giving birth is messy.

Giving birth is hard.

New life is fragile. It needs safe space to grow.

The wise ones didn't find Jesus, the Christ child right away - it may have been years before they arrived with their gifts.

We might learn from the wise ones and assume their attitude - seeking out that new life, perhaps going on long journeys to find it, and finally adoring that new life, tending it. The wise ones followed the light of the star to find the true light, and then blessed it, and in leaving, protected it from evil forces.

This ancient story of Mary, Joseph, the wise ones - this story of God's presence being birthed in and through the everyday folk of their time, remains relevant for us today.

I'm going to end with a story from another culture, one that metaphorically has something to teach us - finding the new life, the Christ light, hidden with us.

Story of the Golden buddha: (for full story, watch first 4 minutes of:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=s8nFACrLxr0&feature=youtu.be>)

A long, long time ago, in Thailand...

What does this story have to offer us?

Each of us has the Light of Christ within us. The Kingdom of God dwells within us.

Little children are born knowing this.

Then we are schooled in the ways of society and the world- we learn this is how we have to act as boys, girls, white, black... we develop a casing of stone - believe we are the stone buddha, not the golden one,

AND THEN

Sometimes life happens. A piece of our armor is knocked off - by loss, by failure, by fear- and maybe, just maybe - Then we get to look inside and see the gold. To find the Light of Christ showing us the way.

As we move into this new year, may we continue to make room for the Christ to grow within us, to nurture, tend, adore this new life.

It may not be time for the new idea, the new way of being, to be birthed yet.

You may carry that seed of new understanding, that gift of the Holy Spirit within you for a long time yet.

Our work is to pick off the concrete, to rediscover the Christ that lives in us and through us.

“the kingdom of God is within you” Jesus told the Pharisees in Luke 17. Let us come, as Mary, Joseph, the wise ones, and in the midst of the messiness of new life, create a space for the Light of Christ to dwell among us.