

Epiphany 2026 – Mt 2:1-12

My mom always looked forward to decorating the Christmas tree each year, which could be a lot of work, but it helped her get through the drab winter months. I preferred to put up the creche scene, so over time that became my task each year. As more and more crib things were added, like a little village scene, it became more and more elaborate and needed more room, so that I eventually had to move it into our gathering room, which was an enclosed porch winterized and also which was very spacious. Along one wall was a very long counter space for the creche.

The big question was always where to put the entourage of the Three Kings with their camels and gifts? Hide them until after Christmas? By then no one cared, since we already had our gifts. Since I started the three kings out as far from the crib scene as I could each year the Three Kings rarely ever made it to the crib with their gifts. If they did, no one noticed.

Later on in life, I was quite surprised to learn that our Orthodox brothers and sisters celebrated the Epiphany with as much zeal as we do our Christmas. I felt a little guilty, since for most folks Christian or secular the celebrations usually end close to midnight Christmas day and the decoration usually came down. Not in our house, our mother never took the crib down until after the Epiphany.

" The Magi returned to their own country by a different way." The word *way* has several meanings, 'a course traveled, a new direction, a possible decision or outcome, a habitual manner, or a mode or pattern of behaving.'" This is from Sr. Jane Wakahiu. "Of course, the Magi did not wish to inform Herod of where the baby Jesus was, but more significant and powerful was their encounter with Jesus; an encounter that so transformed their inner selves that they could not return to their old ways because through the Spirit, the one true mystery of creation, Jesus Christ, had been revealed to them."

She reminds us: "Do our encounters with Christ in the scriptures and the Eucharist transform our lives? Are we going to remain the same after these encounters? Are there things we have taken for granted? We have a choice to remain the same or to open our hearts, to open our eyes to see the light of Christ in others, to walk with those who are searching, to purify our motives and intentions, for the Spirit is generous in guiding and accompanying us on our journey of life."

Joseph was ***called by an angel*** to take Mary as his wife, and later on he heard an angel tell him to head to Egypt because crazy Herod wanted to kill the child. Joseph listened to the angel, as did the Magi in taking a different way.

And when Jesus was 12 years old, he was called to Jerusalem with his family to celebrate the Passover but he remained behind in the Temple area. According to the Aramaic translation, Jesus' response to his parents about remaining behind translate thus: ***"I heard my Father call my name, and how could I not respond?"***

In the quiet time of this Christmas season, have you heard the Father call you by name? How will you respond? Will your Three Wise Men make it to the creche this time with your gifts? We may not have a star to follow, but we have someone greater than a celestial object who will lead us to where you may not want to go. ***But isn't that better than going nowhere?***

Saint Ignatius gives us some simple ways to help us identify God's call:

*-Where and when did you ever **feel fully alive**? And what were you doing at the time? Today, in what situations do you get so absorbed that time passes very quickly?*

*-In what contexts are you able **to both give and receive life and love**? Where do you give and receive excitement, enthusiasm, understanding, caring or compassion, delight, or devotion?*

*-Are there things you feel you must do, things you **"must be about,"** no matter how difficult, exhausting, or unrewarding they may be?*

God calls us through our desires for good things, through our enthusiasms, our absorptions, our hurts, and our healings. Wherever you are giving and receiving life and love is where God is calling you.