

Homily - Epiphany - Jan 7, 2018

Just imagine what it would have been like if the three kings, the Magi, had a GPS. “At the inn, make a right turn, your destination is on the right one-quarter of a mile ahead, at a manger. Look for the animals and the shepherds.” As a matter of fact, they did not, and they made it without a printout of map-quest, without a printed map from a camel refilling station, just with the guidance of a star.

Today, because of what they were doing, we might call the Magi “spiritual seekers.” This is a term used for those who are seeking, in very vague terms, something beyond themselves. Spiritual seekers describe themselves as spiritual, and they would definitely not describe themselves as religious, as belonging to any one doctrine or creed or church or assembly.

They would not describe themselves as faith people either, but rather are quite content with the term “spiritual” without really defining the term. The kings and queens of this type of spirituality are people like Oprah Winfrey who will wax eloquently about the spiritual without ever really defining it and certainly without ever mentioning God, especially a God who revealed himself in time and place.

This type of spiritual journey focuses on themselves, not on someone beyond themselves. In their quest, they will reject what they call “organized religion” in favor of what pleases them. They might find some philosophy that matches what they like and might find some group, organization, fraternity, or gathering of people with similar ideas, but never anything with defined limits.

This spiritual journey may also lead them to develop their own sets of beliefs and standards whereby in addition to what they pick and choose, they add some of their own thoughts and some of others. We could call this a potpourri of beliefs.

Again, this entire quest focuses on them, what pleases them, what they find acceptable. The Magi engaged in a totally different journey. The journey of the Magi focused on something beyond them. They were looking for the goal of their journey. Finding the goal, finding Jesus, they bowed down in worship.

What’s the difference? The spiritual seekers are developing the object of their desire, almost like conjuring up a genie from a bottle. They are the ones doing all the talking, theorizing, and defining.

The true spiritual person leaves himself open to God, speaking to him. In our biblically based spirituality, God is looking for us; God is looking for us who may be spiritual seekers. But the big difference is that the true spiritual seeker is open to hearing what God says to him. The wayward seeker is the one directing how things should be and how they should turn out. A true spiritual journey meets its fulfillment when the person search for God and God searching for the person meet at the crossroads.

The popular spirituality of today must give way to something, to someone higher than itself. That someone is God, the God of scripture who revealed himself, the God who created and directed the world, the God who loves us beyond imagining, the God who lets us direct our lives hoping that we will respond to his invitation.

Ultimately, our spiritual search must allow us to surrender ourselves to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Once the magi saw the child Jesus, they surrendered themselves in worship. Hopefully, we have surrendered ourselves in our spiritual journey to our God, and today we come and pray: O Come Let us Adore Him, Christ the Lord.