

SUNDAY PLUS

Look at the stars

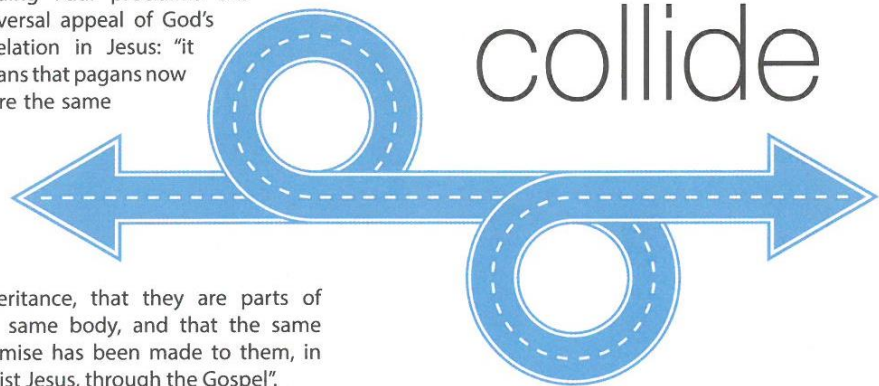
By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Matthew develops the scene in today's Gospel with the care of a master storyteller. He ranges the wise men who follow natural means – a star – against the wise men of Judaea who are able to follow their own sign – the scriptures. It is clear from the story that the wise men of Judaea have enough information in the scriptures to discover the place where the new king will be born; but their discovery is useless, for it does not lead them to homage. They are not disposed to act on what has been revealed.

By contrast, the pagan strangers, after they have gone as far as they can in following the star, are willing to be instructed in a scripture that is foreign to them. They act on what has been given to them and their journey leads them to their destination. They offer homage to the child, offer him their gifts and then make their own way back to their country.

Matthew shows how the two wisdoms collide: the wisdom of the religious institution and the wisdom of the pagan strangers. Writing at a time when many non-Jews, Gentiles, were entering the Christian community, Matthew demonstrates in the story of the Magi that Jesus comes not only for the Jewish race but for the human race. In the second reading Paul proclaims the universal appeal of God's revelation in Jesus: "it means that pagans now share the same

When two wisdoms collide




inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel".

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

The Kings from the East

By Heinrich Heine

"Dear children," they asked in every town,
 Three kings from the land of the sun,
 "Which is the road to Bethlehem?"
 But neither the old nor the young
 Could tell, so the kings rode on:
 Their guide was a golden star,
 Which glittered ahead of them, high in the air,
 So clear, so very clear.
 The star stood still over Joseph's house,
 They all of them stepped in:
 The good ox lowed and the little child cried,
 And the kings began to sing.

Jesus, my Lord
 and my God,
 you walked
 beside us during
 your time on
 Earth. Let me
 walk alongside
 you so that I
 can see people
 as you see them
 and learn to love
 them.  Amen.

Feast of the week
 Monday 8 January



The Baptism of the Lord

The Gospel [of the baptism of Jesus] shows us the scene with which Jesus' public life begins... Jesus does not present himself with a miracle, or by rising to the podium to teach. He queues up with the people who were going to receive baptism from John... with a bare soul and bare feet. And Jesus shares the plight of us sinners: he descends towards

us; he descends into the river, and into the wounded history of humanity. He immerses himself in our waters to heal them, and he immerses himself with us, in our midst. He does not rise up above us, but rather comes down towards us with a bare soul, with bare feet, like the people. He does not go on his own, nor with a selected, privileged group. No: he goes with the people. He belongs to those people and he goes with them to be baptised, with those humble people.

Pope Francis

A great painter, Vincent Van Gogh, once said that his need for God drove him to go outside at night to paint the stars. For that is the way God made us: brimming with desire, directed, like the Magi, towards the stars. With no exaggeration, we can say that we are what we desire. For it is our desires that enlarge our gaze and drive our lives forward, beyond the barriers of habit, beyond banal consumerism, beyond a drab and dreary faith, beyond the fear of becoming involved and serving others and the common good..

Pope Francis

Today: Isaiah 60:1-6 Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6 Matthew 2:1-12	Monday (Feast): Isaiah 55:1-11 or 1 John 5:1-9 Mark 1:7-11	Monday: 1 Samuel 1:1-8 Mark 1:14-20	Tuesday: 1 Samuel 1:9-20 Mark 1:21-28	Wednesday: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20 Mark 1:29-39	Thursday: 1 Samuel 4:1-11 Mark 1:40-45	Friday: 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22 Mark 2:1-12	Saturday: 1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1 Mark 2:13-17	Next Sunday: 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20 John 1:35-42
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