

Questioning God

The story of the Magi has its critics who discount it merely as legend; this is probably because there are a couple of quite unlikely components in the Matthean account of the Magi: (1) The Magi were most probably Zoroastrian astrologers from Persia. Why would these pagan astrologers travel all the way to the kingdom of Judea to worship the newborn king of the Jews? (2) The bible looks unfavorably on astrologers: “Let the astrologers stand forth to save you, the stargazers who forecast at each new moon what would happen to you” (Isaiah 47:13); it also forbids forms of divination like astrology (Deuteronomy 18:10-14). However, Matthew honored these astrologers as the first Gentiles to worship the child Jesus.

However, the story of the Magi has its unique lessons for all times. We have seen so many times how God reverses human expectations in the bible. Was this the case once again in the story of the Magi? For example, God chose the youngest and humblest son of Jesse, the one who tended his father’s sheep, to become the king of Israel (1Samuel 16); He also used the unassuming young Ester to save the Jews from annihilation in the Persian empire.

In the case of the Magi, I think it is fair to say that they were called by God to go and worship the baby Jesus. This calling came in a way that was quite familiar to them – by the means of a bright star! A very important part of the story of the Magi was the manner in which they responded to God’s call – they did not ignore it, but diligently set out on a long and difficult journey to fulfill it. The result was priceless! After a brief setback with King Herod, the star that they had seen at its rising led them to the place where the child was. On entering the place, they found the child. They prostrated and did Him homage, offering Him the precious gifts they had brought from afar – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



In everyday life, do we go out of our way to get our way? When we don’t like something, do we make a big deal out of it? Do we try to make things difficult for no good reason, going into complaint mode and opposing everything that comes our way? If so, it is time to see life through a new lens.

The more I think about it, the more I see how things happen in my life for a reason. More often than not, if I just let things play out, the results turn out so much better than had I spent so much time and effort planning for it. Each time that happens, Psalm 127 rings out in my heart: “If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor; if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil. In vain is your earlier rising, your going later to rest, you who toil for the bread you eat: when He pours gifts on His beloved while they slumber” (ICEL, Psalm 127:1-2).

The way we react to things that happen in life can be very crucial – it could be a wonderful blessing the way God intended it to be, or it could turn into a huge disaster or disappointment. The latter often results when we stand in God’s way by allowing our pride and controlling nature to take over. In the Book of Acts, Stephen said to his persecutors, “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always oppose the Holy Spirit!” (Acts 7:51). And as Jesus Himself said to Saul, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goad” (Acts 26:14). If we can see life in this new lens, our prayer will always be: “Lord, if this is your will, then let it be done. I will not stand in your way!” If we can see life in this new lens, what a blessed life can we begin to live!

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PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fr. Bill will administer the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in the Sanctuary after the 10:30am Mass. Those who would like to receive the Anointing of the Sick, please come to the front of the Sanctuary right after Mass.



Attention children and parents: We will have Sunday School this Sunday. Parents are welcome to sit in the Sunday School classes.

We will not have our monthly faith workshop this Sunday.

2025 Year of the Snake



新年快樂!

We need volunteers to help take down and put away the Christmas decorations after the 10:30am Mass on Sunday. You may take the poinsettias home.



Our special Mass for the Feast Day of the Holy Name of Jesus will be on January 19, 2025 in lieu of the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Our Chinese New Year Mass, solemn tribute to our ancestors and Chinese New Year celebration will be on February 2, 2025.

The 2025 Chinese Liturgical calendars are still available in the church foyer. Please remember to take a copy or two home with you, and share with your family and friends. Although the cost of materials and production has increased, the suggested donation for each calendar is still \$5, same as last year.

Prayer List: Liu Guifang, Lydia Chen, Lu Shumi, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing, Pan Bohao and Xu Taicheng.

Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	Sundays 9:00-9:30 AM	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)	Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM	Mondays 6:00 PM (English)
	By Appointment	
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)		Eucharistic Adoration
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	Anointing of the Sick	Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		
First Saturday 10:00 AM (Chinese)		