

They went through a different way

Matthew 2:12

Monthly Reflection:

January 2023

The Christmas season concludes with the visit of the Magi to the child Jesus in Bethlehem. Only the Gospel of Matthew mentions the Magi's visit (Mt.2:1-12). They came "from the east," seeing the "star," to worship the "King of the Jews". I would like to offer the verse chosen for this month's reflection as a star that can guide us fruitfully through this new year. The magi had an encounter with Jesus. This provides "life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (Deus Caritas Est #1). The angel directing the magi to take a different path represents the new path that every person who encounters Christ in his heart should take. "The old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

'We saw His star'. In the story of the Magi, 'star' is the symbol of divine intervention that prompted their journey to Bethlehem. As the year 2022 came to a close, we sometimes feel the pain of missing the star and straying from God's plan for our lives. The fortune of 2023 is the gift of an opportunity to return to God's path. The challenge of this new year's journey is to stay focused on this new path. We can do this by renewing the freshness of our encounter experience daily.

The angels announced the birth of Jesus by singing the hymn of Gloria. Having seen the angels and heard the hymn of Gloria, 'we have come to worship Him'. The privilege of this new way is to repeat the hymn of Gloria in the varied experiences of our lives, thus illuminating our paths with joy and mirth even in the challenges and confusions of our daily lives.

'When King Herod heard' from the Magi about the birth of Jesus, 'he was disturbed.' As an insecure king, he was always on the lookout for those who posed a threat to his rule. He attempted to manipulate the magi first, and when that failed, he resorted to the most heinous cruelty by killing the innocents. We discover that there may be 'herods' within us as we walk this new path. Is there anything in our lives where we would rather not have His authority? Are some of the commands in the Bible upsetting



to us? However, these very disturbances have the potential to become stars in our lives, leading us to Jesus. They point out the areas where we need to grow in repentance. Herod could have used his inner turmoil to understand his heart's wrong motives, but he did not. But the new way beckons us to recognise those disturbances and use them to enter into greater joy through holy repentance.

“Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh”. The three gifts clearly symbolize the three key aspects of Christ's identity and mission; the gold points to Jesus' royalty, the frankincense to his divinity, and the myrrh to his humanity. Our health, wealth, time, and talents are the gifts to be offered to Jesus. What you have is a gift from God, and what you become is a gift to God in return. The new year is a new opportunity to open our treasure box and surrender ourselves to the mission and ministry of our Lord, for the new way He shows us is a way of magnanimity and generosity.

“They went through a different way.” The story of Magi concludes on a happy note of returning home through a different way. And only through this new way can we return to our eternal heavenly home. Therefore, let us renew our desire to joyfully walk in this new way with Jesus as our Lord along with our precious sisters and brothers. Let the laughter and merriment of our journey on this way allure others to Jesus, and let them also discover the new way that leads them to eternal blessedness.

Bishop Raphael Thattil
Ecclesiastical Advisor to Jesus Youth International Council

