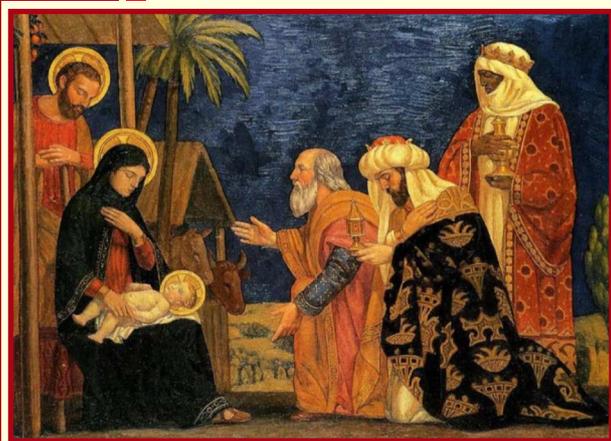


Reflection from the Superior General

Dreaming of “a different way”, the wise men from the east followed the light. They met the Christ-child – the light of the world - before whom they fell on their knees in homage (Matt. 2). On this feast of the Epiphany and with this New Year of 2020 these wise men invite us to share in their dream of travelling by a different way.

This New Year these adventurers call us to accompany them on their journey to Mary and to Joseph and to their Son, the Saviour of the world. We are invited to a radical conversion of heart by encountering Christ. It is a profound journey. We may sometimes seem to lose our way, no longer seeing the light of the star. We may meet powerful people, like Herod, who want to claim us for their own agendas and so divert us. We may just tire of the journey and allow ourselves to be distracted. We may be horrified by the violence around us, “like Rachel weeping for her children”. The feast of the Epiphany and this new year invite us on the journey of a profound spiritual conversion.



These generous pilgrims share with us their dream of offering our best gifts to the Lord. I offer to the Lord whatever I know is my greatest talent, my greatest desire, my deepest blessing. Mary receives our gifts and sees that they are well distributed. It can be so difficult to offer our gifts, to let them go. Some of our units are painfully handing over ministries and institutions that have been blessings to so many people for a very long time. We hand them over to the Mary, and to the Lord, and we keep moving forward. What can be true for us as Provinces and Districts can be even more challenging for us as individuals. Sometimes it can be handing over my health, my reputation, my beloved ministry, my security. These are our gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Mary graciously distributes them.

The Magi met the Lord in the company of the shepherds. These shepherds were disregarded as “refuse of this world” (Const. 228). The Son of Mary moved easily among such people. The child was born into a family of internal refugees, displaced migrants, lost and far from home. The Lord still comes among us in the lives of such people and if we want to meet him this year we will need to be there with people who are marginalized. Jesus is Good News for and among the poor. We will meet him there.

The wise men travelled together. They sought their way together, discerning the signs around them and encouraging each other for the journey. We Marists are called to journey together into 2020. We are not called to be “loners”. Our community life is much more than a matter of convenience (or inconvenience!). It is a communal discernment of God’s will, sharing together the joys and hardships of the journey.

These travelers returned home to speak joyfully of all they had experienced along the journey. They are the first missionaries, not to some distant land, but to their own people. They speak joyfully of the adventures of their own lives and of the delight they have experienced in their hearts on meeting Christ.

These missionaries from the east could speak of their memories of Mary gathering everyone around her Son. That is the different way of Mary and of our Marist vocation – to gather people around the Son, until the end of time.

The adventurers returned “by a different way”. As we Marists venture into 2020 we can ask ourselves what is our dream of a “different way” and how can it guide us on our journey this year.

A blessed Feast of the Epiphany and a grace-filled journey into the New Year of 2020!

John Larsen s.m.