

SEARCHING FOR JESUS

Suppose that, today, you would hear the shout, “The Lord is here! Go!” Where would you go? Where would you look?

When the shepherds were told that the Savior had just been born into the world, they were given directions by an angel. They were told to look for a baby in one of the stables. That was not what they would have expected to hear. The Magi, having received a sign and understanding that an important ruler had been born, set out to find him. Their logic took them to the palace of a king with all its worldly treasures. However, they did not find him there. What they went on to find was an ordinary-looking family living in an ordinary house.

Where would the shepherds and the Magi have searched for Jesus today? I have been pondering that question lately.

Might the Magi of today go to Buckingham Palace in London, or even to the White House in Washington? While the Magi made a mistake by looking for the new-born King in the wrong place (even though, to them, it appeared to be an obvious place to look), they were actually assisted as a result of that mistake. Out of his hatred and jealousy, King Herod actually gave them accurate directions. And, where would the shepherds of today be told to go? What sign would we be told to look for today?

The shepherds were told to look for an infant in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. An ordinary feed trough seems hardly the place where one should be able to find an Anointed One of the Lord. However, that is where they did find him and they found him dressed in swaddling clothes (narrow strips of cloth wrapped around an infant to restrict movement).

In our search, we tend to run to this place or to that, hoping to gain the peace and joy that was to come with his presence. But, we keep coming away empty. Perhaps, we, too, even today, need to look in the most unlikely place. In reaction to the world and all its empty diversions, we should get a sense of the right direction. Where is it that we can get away from all that? Is there such a place?

The Son of God told us that the Kingdom of God is within us. Our Catholic Christian faith teaches that God comes to dwell within us. How much more ordinary can that be? How much more improbable can that sound? How much more could God be restricted in his activity than by us? We must be the place!

Humanity has been searching for the Christ ever since He was born into the world. We continue to search to this day. Jesus, on the other hand, waits to be found. But, the wonderful news is that there is no need to go anywhere. It is no longer a matter of geography but of the heart. It is within ourselves that we find the promised peace and joy of the Savior Who came to set us free.