

The Child of Bethlehem shows us that God is near
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BECOME HUMBLE IN ORDER TO RECOGNISE THE GREATNESS OF GOD

VATICAN CITY, 6 JAN 2010 (VIS) -

In the Vatican Basilica at 10 a.m. today, the Pope presided at Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

The message of the star

In his homily Benedict XVI commented on the readings from the Book of Isaiah and from the Gospel of St. Matthew, explaining that the Magi "were not the last but the first of the great procession of people who, through all ages of history, were able to recognise the message of the star, to follow the paths indicated by Sacred Scripture, and thus to find Him Who is apparently weak and fragile but Who, in fact, has the power to bring the greatest and most profound joy to the human heart".

"In Him", the Pope continued, "is the expression of the stupendous truth that God knows us and is close to us, that His greatness and power are not expressed in the logic of the world, but in the logic of a defenceless child Whose strength is only that of the love He gives us. In the course of history there are always people who are illuminated by the light of the star, who find the path and manage to encounter Him. All of them live, each in their own way, the same experience as the Magi".

"If, then, we read the promise of the prophet Isaiah and its fulfilment in the Gospel of Matthew within the great context of all history, it is evident that what we are told - and what we seek to reproduce in the nativity scene - is not a dream or a vain interplay of feelings and emotions devoid of strength or authenticity; rather, it is the Truth that irradiates around the world".

"Only in that Child is the power of God made manifest, the power which brings together men of all centuries so that, under His lordship, they may follow the path of love which transfigures the world. And yet, although the few of Bethlehem have become many, believers in Jesus Christ always seem to be few. Many have seen the star but only a few have understood its message".

Why is it that some seek and find, while others do not?

"We can, then, ask ourselves", said the Holy Father, "why is it that some seek and find, while others do not? What is it that opens their eyes and hearts? What is lacking in those who remain indifferent, in those who show the way but do not move themselves? And we may answer that too much self-confidence, the belief they possess a perfect knowledge of reality, and the presumption of having already formulated a definitive judgement about things makes their hearts closed and insensitive to the novelty of God. They are sure of the idea they have of the world and do not allow themselves to be intimately moved by the adventure of a God Who wants to meet them. They place their trust more in themselves than in Him, and do not believe it possible that God is so great that He can become small, that he can truly draw close to us.

"In the end", he added, "what they lack is the authentic humility capable of submitting itself to that which is greater, but also the authentic courage which brings us to believe in that which is truly great, even if it shows itself in a defenceless Child. What they lack is the evangelical capacity to become children at heart, to be amazed and to abandon the self so as to start down the path indicated by the star, the path of God. Yet the Lord", the Pope concluded, "has the power to make us see and to save ourselves".