

*(Prayer - Patti Casey)*

They were not kings, and while Matthew's gospel tells us there were three gifts, he never clarifies just how many people made this journey.

I like to imagine there were many more... picture a crowd of the most well educated people of profound faith, keepers of knowledge and tradition, highly educated, all converging on a young child, born of the simplest means, to proclaim his divinity and royal authority.

Likely Zoroastrian priests from Babylon, or even deeper into the lands of the Persian Empire, the Magi left behind comfortable lives to travel into the unknown, guided by a star, and their own faith, searching for someone they did not yet know.

Searching for a messiah, both prophesied in their own religion, and passed on in story from generation to generation by Jews brought to Babylon who transformed their captivity into a large and proud colony that would last for over 1,000 years, sharing their knowledge and influence.

The Magi had no idea who or what they would find, and yet they persisted on. They knew this was the one. Before he was old enough to even speak a word. They just knew.

Sometimes we follow stars to the most unexpected corners of the Earth, trusting nothing other than our own knowledge that we wouldn't undertake the journey if it wasn't essential.

The Magi followed their dream and their instinct, knowing that Herod wasn't to be trusted, and in an act of civil disobedience, defeated him by simply ignoring his directives, traveling home by another road.

Sometimes, without reason, we follow our dreams, because they are all we have left. We don't trust the darkness that sent us, but instead the light that guides us. It doesn't have to make sense. That's what faith is about.

They traveled into an occupied land, in which Caesar Augustus had already declared himself to be the son of God, and in an act of resistance, declared, 'no, we believe in this child, backed up with all of our knowledge and wisdom.'

Sometimes, we have to take a good look at who people are claiming to be, and trust our own faith, despite how many battles they've won, despite their fortunes, or how many followers they have.

The Magi brought gifts of gold, affirming Jesus' royalty, frankincense, affirming his divinity, and myrrh, foreshadowing the sacrifice he would make to keep the light of the world shining forever.

Sometimes, we underestimate the power of our own gifts, no matter how small.

Today, we mark another year of having faith that indeed, we are on the right path, even when it seems impossible. We have followed our own stars, even when our word seemed impossible, and now, we illuminate this space with the stories of where we ended up.

Perfectly imperfect journeys, mirroring our perfectly imperfect selves.

Who remembers your word? And where did it take you?

Because your story is a form of witness, I invite you to come to the front and tell it, so that you may best be seen and heard as God intended you to be.

While you are up here, feel free to let this year's star select you. If you don't have a story to tell, hold on...your chance is coming.

Who remembers your word? And where did it take you?

*(Into This Night - Patti Casey)*