

No Boundaries Around Light  
Rev. Alan Claassen January 3, 2016  
Matthew 2:1-12 John O'Donohue

Hello I am one of the wise men that visited Jesus.

It has been so long since that time, that I can't remember which one I am,  
or if I was the one with gold, the frankincense of the myrrh,

but there is one misconceptions that I would like to clear up.

I am not a king, my two friends were not kings.

I know that you all often sing a song entitled, We 3 Kings of Orient Are but we were not  
kings. We were magi, astrologers, star-watchers, wise men from the east.

I do admit to liking the chorus to that song, "Star of wonder, Star of light."

The significance of our being there in a manger in Bethlehem,

was that we came from a long way away, from a different country,  
culture, way of thinking,  
to see this who this star was guiding us towards.

We came from Persia, Babylon,

the place where the Jewish people were exiled hundreds of years before.

Even though we came from a long way,

we were coming back to people who we knew.

Our ancestors were affected by their ideas

and we also had a hope for someone who would come  
and set the world back on its proper course.

A course in line with the universe, in line with the stars, in line with creation.

Our being by the side of this infant said, and still says,

something about Jesus, something about God.

Which is, that God is not the property of any one nation,

any one people, any one culture, any one religion.

This was an entirely new way of thinking about God.

A way of thinking about God that I have observed

as I have travels through the centuries

seems to be forgotten quite often.

You are all living in one of those times right now.

This new way of thinking about God is hard for people of

who are frightened to understand.

It is also difficult for people who misuse their power to exploit people

to understand.

And it's not because it's a difficult idea to grasp

it's because it's just such a different concept

from others that we also get taught as we grow up.

Jesus grew up to say that there is a new way for people to live:

You show wisdom by trusting people

You handle leadership by serving

You handle offenders by forgiving

You handle money by sharing

you handle enemies by loving

You receive people from foreign lands with opens arms.

In fact you have a new attitude toward everything, everybody.

Toward nature, toward the place you live,

toward women and men,

toward the poor, toward yourself.

toward every single living thing.

Now this isn't the way of the world at large is it?

In fact if you start talking about trusting people and serving people  
and forgiving, sharing, and loving people  
you're likely to be considered foolish, ....or dangerous.

And you know that's what happened to us. To us wise guys I mean.

We were so profoundly moved and changed by seeing a vision of God in the form  
of a human baby

that we realized we were a threat to King Herod.

Seeing that the star we followed for so long brought us to this

poor family, this child in a stable,

instantly deposed King Herod from his throne

So we didn't go back to him as we said we would

when we first came into town.

We went home by another way.

Another way.

Being a follower of the Star of Jesus means looking for and following another way.

Sometimes this requires a lot of imagination,

sometimes it just takes freeing up your God given common sense.

When we arise in the dawn

with our thoughts focused on the love that fires the sun,

then it is love that keeps us burning.

And morning by morning, this has a profound affect upon

how we view our world and all that lives upon it.

I must admit to feeling a deep sadness as I have continued my travels over the centuries,  
particularly now.

There are many indications that Humanity has forgotten its connection with creation are instead still following Herod's lead.

Whether it's the slow destruction of pollution  
or the mismanagement of limited resources  
or the immediate destruction that we can inflict with nuclear weapons  
humanity has come upon a power that it does not know how to control.

But along with this sadness I also have a sense of hope that comes from seeing some members of the human community aware of our need for healing and living our lives in a another way.

When we don't realize the Source of our life  
we stumble in confusion and sorrow.  
But when we realize where we came from,  
we become naturally tolerant, amused,  
kind-hearted and tenacious as a grandmother.

Immersed in the wonder of God  
we can rise to this occasion.  
For our strength, our wisdom comes from God.

We are in a period in history where there is great potential  
for uniting the parts of ourselves that have been separated,  
such as science and religion, such as men and women,  
such as people of different cultures.

God's theory of relativity is simply that everything is related.  
We are all relatives.

We are all made of the same stuff.

We all came from that moment when God said,

Let there be light.

You can't separate us from each other,

human from nature,

body from mind and spirit,

poor from rich, Muslim from Christian.

I have seen people all around this planet, in small communities,

in seemingly insignificant ways,

saying no to hate and yes to compassion,

no to oppression and yes to economic justice.

So when your intended route seems to be taking a turn for the worse;

take a word from the wise; turn around, try another way.

Think of your life,

and everyone's life as a gift that you take to God,

the one who gave us the gift of life in the beginning.

Everything we do is giving our gifts back to God.

Gold, frankincense, myrrh

Kindness, compassion, a warm meal and a place to sleep

In my journeys I have discovered

you don't need to look to the stars to see bright lights shining,

you just need to look into someone's eyes

and see the magnificence of the universe.

And now, before I take my leave and return to my wandering  
I would like to share with you the following blessing that I heard from a wise woman this weekend.  
Her name is Sylvia Boorstein, a Jewish/Buddhist, who teaches and laughs at Spirit Rock  
Meditation Center.

May you live each moment fully  
May you greet it as a friend  
May you be safe. May you be happy.  
May you be strong. May you be peaceful.

And may all the stars in the starfield say ...