



Harvest Time

Christians of wealth engaging with money as a doorway to spiritual transformation.

The Magi Are on the Move

By Rosemary Feerick

*"Follow the lights. And if you can't see the lights, follow the people who are following the light."
Father Bruno Bamhart, OSB Cam, Midnight Mass Christmas 2009*

The Magi are cresting my file box.

For the past several weeks, the wise ones have been on the move in my home, making their way over mountains and rough places, on their way to the manger.

My son Ian set them out when I was cooking dinner one night. Piece by piece he unpacked the figures of our nativity scene and positioned them in their proper place. When I came over to admire his work, the Magi were right there with the shepherds, Jesus and Mary, glowing in the light of our tree.

The next day Ian thought better of it. "No, this is all wrong," he announced. "Jesus is not supposed to be here. And the Magi are still a long way off."

Dutifully I heeded his concern and set Jesus in an empty bowl on my altar, explaining that "Jesus is back in the hand of God." Ian meanwhile moved through the house collecting obstacles for the Magi's journey. In front of the manger, he set torn pillows from our old couch, my yoga bolster, a cardboard file box, and a plastic trash can. Then our Nativity scene was no longer a tidy decoration tucked tastefully away in a corner of beauty but an obstacle we had to traverse in the course of our daily lives.

One day, Ian decided that the Magi needed some help. He strung a line of tiny Christmas lights along their path to encourage their steps.

Still, the Magi fell off the path lots of times – when kids raced by in a chase, when I was carrying laundry on my hip, when David was on his way to get the phone. Someone would knock a pillow and then down would go one of the wise ones. At first, Ian cried whenever the travelers were upset. But gradually, we all got used to getting them back on track.

So it has gone all Advent. Slowly, slowly, the Magi have been making their way, traversing my house and mind.

Most years, I pay close attention to Mary's journey. I too was once pregnant in December. I too once followed a call that radically upset my life. In years past, Mary's story has

inspired me and encouraged my own attempts to respond to the mystery of the incarnation.

But not this year. This year, I am watching the Magi.

They have climbed the cushion that is leaking stuffing and can see the star lan hung above the manger.

I remember the times in my life when I have seen a vision and begun to move toward it. Like the day I sat at a table on a farm in Mississippi and saw how rich, poor, black, white, brown, young, and old can gather as family. Like the moment when I inherited money and knew it was supposed to move as a currency of Christ's love and justice in the world. Like the evening when I sat in a circle of friends and saw how a relationship between a man and woman can be - a partnership between spiritual companions united by their love of God. Like the day my sons and I watched a bi-racial man inaugurated and saw how the American people can embody a spirit of hope.

The visions I have seen come complete. As if I could just step into them. As if there were no obstacles to cross. As if there were not all

the stuff in me and the world that makes it so hard to bring the visions God gives to life. The magi are nearing the top of my yoga bolster. The manger is within sight.

In real life, I don't get to just step into the visions I see. The journey is long, difficult, and necessary. If I want to participate in how God is being born today, I must be converted first and that happens somewhere between the moment when a vision is given and when it becomes reality.

It's Christmas Eve. The Magi are crossing the curved lid of the plastic trash can. It is the most slippery part of their trek. Somehow lan has found a way to balance them on top of the mess. They are almost there.

So many times the evil spirit uses the garbage of life to distract me, going after my weak spots to convince me that what I see is impossible, unrealistic, foolhardy or insane. The closer I get to where God is moving the stronger that voice becomes. It is easy to slip and get lost in the mess.

The wise ones keep walking.

They make it. Every year, they arrive at the crèche with their well known gifts: myrrh, gold, and frankincense. I see too that they have something else: their willingness to see and to walk the journey all the way through.

So may we.

