



Wednesday Prayer

Epiphany – The Bright Star Is Good News

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

Matthew 2:1-4

We know this story of the powerful and paranoid King Herod, afraid of the humble baby Jesus. We celebrate the magi following the bright star to the royal birth. We rejoice that they defy the king of the land, going home by another way so as not to lead Herod to Jesus.

Professor Elisabeth Johnson, in her [commentary on this Gospel](#) passage reflects,

“For Herod, and for all who plot evil in dark corners, the bright star of Jesus’ birth is not good news. It illuminates a world much larger than Herod imagined, a world in which he is not in control.”

For you and me, it’s hard to even think of the bright star of Jesus’ birth as anything but good news. The news we long to hear, the news we need to hear, and the news we’re led to share.

Often in this work to prevent child sexual exploitation and trafficking, I hear that this is a crime that thrives on silence, in the shadows, in the corners, in the evil places we’d rather not think about. Our work can be a bright star to illuminate the beauty in every single young person, to keep these crimes from being invisible, to take the power and control away from those who plot evil against and harm children.

Another meaning of epiphany is: a moment in which you suddenly see or understand something in a new or very clear way. Sarah Ransome, a trafficking survivor of the Epstein-Maxwell crimes says of Hon. Judge Richard Berman,

“For the first time, I actually saw someone in a position of power who actually had any form of respect for us. And he listened. And that’s all I ever wanted was for someone to listen and someone to hear me.”¹

My hope is that we go into this new year with the epiphany of seeing the difference we can make – shifting power dynamics, supporting young people in need of healthy love and support, ending victim-shaming and moving to compassionate listening and support.

Jesus, humble king, may we see your bright star in each young person we encounter, may we share the good news in our work to protect children. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

¹ Ransome, Sarah. Bryant, Lisa, Dir. Netflix. *Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich*, 2020. Film.