

“The Three Kings” (Mary of Agreda)

552. The three Magi Kings, who came to find the infant Jesus after His birth, were from countries to the east of Palestine. Their coming was prophesied especially by David, and before him, by Balaam, who, having been hired by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse the Israelites, he blessed them instead. In this blessing Balaam said, that he would see the King Christ, although not at once, and that he would behold Him, although not present; for he did not see Him with his own eyes, but through the Magi, his descendants many centuries after. He said, also, that a star would arise unto Jacob, which was Christ, who arose to reign for ever in the house of Jacob.

Nm 24:15 “The oracle (prophesy) of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,

Nm 24:16 the oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes uncovered:

24:17 ***I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh*** (Nigh means near in place, time, or relationship): a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth.

553. These three Kings were well versed in the world's sciences, and well read in the Scriptures of the Jews; and on

account of their learning they were called Magi. (Magi means wise men.) By their knowledge of Scripture, and by asking questions to the Jews, they were influenced with a belief in the coming of the Messiah expected by that people. They were, moreover, upright men, truthful and very just in the government of their countries. Since their territories were not large as kings today, (Mary Agreda wrote this in 1657 and the countries of kings were much larger at that time.) they governed them easily, and personally administered justice as wise and prudent rulers. This is the true office of kings, and therefore the Holy Spirit says, that He holds their hearts in His hands in order to direct them like irrigated waters to the fulfillment of His holy will.

Prv 21:1 **The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He will.**

They were also of noble character, free from love of money and worldly things, which so oppresses, degrades and cuts down the spirits of other rulers. Because these Magi governed countries that bordered each other and lived not far from each other, they were mutual friends and shared the virtues and the knowledge which they had practiced, consulting each other in the more important events of their kingdoms. In all things they communicated as most faithful friends.

554. I (Mary of Agreda) have already mentioned in the eleventh chapter (No. 492) that in the same night in which the Word of God was born, these wise men were informed of His Birth by the holy Angels. It happened in the following manner: one of the guardian Angels of our Queen, of a higher order than that of the guardian Angels of the three kings, was sent from the cave of the Nativity. By His superior spirit He enlightened the three guardian Angels of the Kings informing these Angels at the same time of the will and command of the Lord, that each of them should reveal the mystery of the birth of Christ our Redeemer. Immediately and in the same hour each of the three Angels spoke in dreams to the wise man under His care. This is the usual course of Angelic revelations when the Lord communicates with souls through the Angels. This enlightenment of the Kings concerning the mysteries of the birth of the Word of God (Jesus) was very abundant and clear. They were informed that the King of the Jews was born as true God and Man; that He was the Messiah and Savior who was expected. This Child was the One who was promised in the Scriptures and prophecies; and that they themselves, the three Kings, were singled out by the Lord to seek the star, which Balaam had foretold. Nm (24:17) Each one of the three Kings also was made aware that the same revelation was being to each of them; and that this miracle should be fruitful, and they were expected to co-operate with the Angel's message and do what it pointed out. They were inspired and inflamed with a great love and with a desire to know the God made Man, to

adore Him as their Creator and Redeemer, and serve Him with most perfect devotion. In all this they were greatly assisted by their distinguished moral virtues, which they had acquired; for on account of them they were excellently disposed for the operation of the Holy Spirit.

555. After receiving these heavenly revelations in their sleep, the three Kings awoke at the same hour of the night, and prostrating themselves on the ground and humiliating themselves to the dust, they adored in spirit the unchangeable being of God.



Prostrated

The Three Kings gave praise to God for His infinite mercy and goodness for having sent the divine Word (Jesus) to assume flesh of a Virgin in order to redeem the world and give eternal salvation to men. Then all three of them, governed by an impulse of the same Spirit, resolved to depart without delay for Judea in search of the divine Child in order to adore Him. The three Kings prepared gifts of gold, incense (frankincense) and myrrh in equal quantities, being guided by the Holy Spirit; and without having conferred with each other concerning their actions, the three of them arrived at the same

decision and the same plan of acting upon it. In order to set out immediately, they gathered together on the same day the necessary camels and provisions together with a number of servants for the journey. Without listening to the objections of their families and government, or considering their safety in foreign regions, or caring for any outward show of authority, without knowing anything about where they were going, or gathering information for identifying the Child, they at once decided with emotional zeal and love to depart in order to seek the newborn King.

556. At the same time the holy Angel, who had brought the news from Bethlehem to the kings, *formed a most magnificent star, although not so large as those of the sky; for it was not to climb higher than was necessary for the purpose of its creation.* It took its course through the sky in order to guide and direct the holy Kings to the cave, where the Child awaited them. The star's splendor was of a different kind from that of the sun and the other stars. The star was a most beautiful light and it illumined the night like a brilliant torch, and this star could be seen during the day. On coming out of their palaces each one of the kings saw this new star although each from a different standpoint, because it was only one star and it was placed in such distance and height that it could be seen by each one at the same time. As the three of them followed the guidance of this miraculous star, they soon met. Thereupon the star immediately came closer to them, descending in the sky and rejoicing them by shedding its light over them at closer

range. They began to discuss among themselves about the revelation they had received and about their plans, finding that they were identical. They were more and more inflamed with devotion and with the pious desire of adoring the newborn God, and broke out in praise and admiration at the works and mysteries of the Almighty.

557. The Magi continued their journey under the guidance of the star without losing sight of it until they arrived at Jerusalem. This city was the capital of the Jews, they suspected that this was the birthplace of their legitimate and true King. They entered into the city and openly asked questions after Him, saying: Where is the king of the Jews who has been born? For we have seen His star in the East, announcing to us His Birth and we have come to see Him and adore Him. Their questioning came to the ears of Herod, who at that time unjustly reigned in Judea and lived in Jerusalem. The wicked king, panic-stricken at the thought that a more legitimate claim to the throne should have been born, felt much disturbed and outraged by this report. With him the whole city was aroused, some of the people, out of flattery to the king, others on account of the fear of disturbance. Immediately, as saint Matthew relates, Herod called together a meeting of the principal priests and scribes in order to ask them where Christ was to be born according to the prophecies and holy Scriptures. They answered that, according to the words of one of the Prophets Micah, (Micah 5:2) He was to be born in Bethlehem.

558. Herod began his evil plan to destroy the Messiah after hearing the priests

explain where the prophecies. Then Herod secretly called the Magi in order to learn at what time they had seen the star. After receiving their answer, Herod sent them away to Bethlehem, saying to them in hidden anger: "Go and inquire after the Infant, and when you have found Him, announce it to me, in order that I, too, may go to recognize and adore Him". The Magi departed, leaving the hypocritical king ill at ease.

Mt 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying,

2:2 "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him."

2:3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 2:4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

2:5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 2:6 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern My people Israel.'"

2:7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared;

2:8 and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the Child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him."

2:9 When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which

they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was.

Although Herod could have eased his mind in regard to his kingship by the thought that a recently born infant could not be enthroned so very soon, yet human wealth is so unstable and deceitful that it can be over thrown even by an infant, or by the mere distant threat.

559. On leaving Jerusalem the Magi again found the star, which at their entrance into Jerusalem they had lost from view. By its light they were led to Bethlehem and to the cave of the Nativity. Diminishing in size the star hovered over the head of the infant Jesus and bathed Him in its light; then the star dissolved and disappeared. Our great Queen had already been told of the coming of the Kings, and when She understood that they were approaching the cave, She requested saint Joseph not to leave, but to stay at Her side. This he did, although the sacred text does not mention it. Like many other things passed over in the Gospels, this was not necessary for establishing the truth of the mystery. Nevertheless it is certain that saint Joseph was present when the Kings adored the infant Jesus. The Magi had already been instructed that the Mother of the Newborn was a Virgin, and that He was the true God and not a son of saint Joseph. Nor would God have permitted them to be led to the cave ignorant of such an important circumstance. They were fully instructed as to all these things, and they were

deeply impressed by the sacramental character of these complicated mysteries. 560. The heavenly Mother awaited the pious and devout kings, standing with the Child in Her arms. Inside the humble and poor surroundings of the cave, in modesty and beauty above all women, She shown at the same time a majesty more than human, the light of heaven shining in Her face. Still more visible was this light in the Child, shedding through the cavern, which made it like a heaven. The three kings of the East entered and at the first sight of the Son and Mother, they were over whelmed with wonder. They prostrated themselves upon the earth, and in this position they worshiped and adored the Infant, acknowledging Him as the true God and Man, and as the Savior of the human race. By the Holy Spirit they were filled with new enlightenment. They could see many Angelic spirits, who as servants and ministers of the King of kings and Lord of lords attended upon Him in holy fear. Arising, they congratulated our Queen as Mother of the Son of the eternal Father; and they approached to reverence Her on their knees. They sought Her hand in order to kiss it, as they were accustomed to do to their queens in their countries. But the most prudent Lady withdrew Her hand, and offered instead that of the Redeemer of the world, saying: "My spirit rejoices in the Lord and My Soul blesses and praises Him; because among all the nations He has called and selected you to look upon and behold that which many kings and prophets have in vain desired to see, namely, Him who is the eternal Word made Man. Let us praise His name on

account of the sacraments and mysteries given to His people; let us kiss the earth which He makes holy by His real presence".

561. After Mary had said these words the three kings and Mary humiliated themselves again, adoring the infant Jesus. They acknowledged the great blessings of their living in the time when the Sun of justice was arising in order to illumine the darkness. Thereupon they spoke to saint Joseph, congratulating him and praising his good fortune in being chosen as the spouse of the Mother of God; and they expressed wonder and compassion at the great poverty, beneath which were hidden the greatest mysteries of heaven and earth. In this conversation they consumed three hours, and then the kings asked permission of most holy Mary to go to the city in order to seek a lodging, as they could find no room for themselves in the cave. Some people had accompanied them; but the Magi alone participated in the light and the grace of this visit. The others took notice merely of what passed exteriorly, and witnessed only the poor and neglected condition of the Mother and Her husband. Though wondering at the strange event, they perceived nothing of its mystery. The Magi took leave and departed, while most holy Mary and Joseph, being again alone with their Child, glorified Him with new songs of praise, because His name was beginning to be known and adored among the Gentiles.

TEACHING OF THE MOST HOLY QUEEN MARY.

562. My daughter, the events recorded in this chapter contain much for the instruction of kings and princes and for the other faithful; as for instance, the prompt obedience and humility of the Magi, which men should imitate, and the heartless wickedness of Herod, for each reaped the fruit of his actions. The kings reaped the fruit of justice and other virtues, which they practiced; while Herod reaped those of ambition and pride by which he had taken the government unjustly, and of other vices into which he cast himself without restriction or moderation. To yourself must you apply the doctrine contained in what you have written; always remembering that all the perfection of a Christian life must be founded upon the Catholic truths, and in the constant and firm acknowledgment of them, as they are taught by holy faith.

563. By such a arrangement your soul will be prepared in the manner I require of you. For I desire that the Almighty find in you the sweet readiness to adopt what ever is shown to you, and to put in practice what ever may be commanded without any worldly applause and benefit. I promise, that if you follow My counsel as you should, I will be your star and guide on the ways of the Lord, so that you will quickly arrive at the vision and enjoyment of your God and of your highest good in Zion. (Zion is the city that David built. This city represents heavenly Jerusalem.) In this doctrine, and the actions of the devout kings of the east, there is contained a most effective means for the salvation of souls; yet this is known to few and listened by a still smaller number of men. It is this: that the inspirations and enlightenments are

usually sent by God to mankind in a certain order. At first some are sent to inflame the soul to practice some of the virtues; if the soul corresponds, the Most High sends other and greater ones in order to move the soul to greater perfection in virtue; and thus, profiting from previous graces, the soul is ready for still others, receiving ever greater helps and securing an increase in grace. You will therefore understand two things: first, how great a damage it is to neglect the exercise of any virtue and not to practice perfection according to the rules of the divine inspirations; secondly, how often God would give great assistance to the souls, if they would begin to correspond to the smaller ones; since God's hope is they will prepare for His greater ones. For He wishes to deal with the soul according to His just judgments. But because they over look this orderly manner of His invitations, He suspends the flow of His divine gifts and He refuses to the souls what was intended for them if they had not placed an obstacle, allowing them to fall from one abyss to the other.

564. The Magi and Herod pursued opposite courses: the Magi met the first inspirations and graces by the practice of the good works; thus they made themselves by many virtues for being called and drawn by divine revelation to the knowledge of the mysteries of the Word becoming Man, the birth of the divine Word and the Redemption of the human race. But Herod, on the other hand, by his hard-heartedness and neglect of the helps, which God offered him for the practice of virtue, was drawn into the abyss of his measureless pride

and ambition. These vices hurled him into such cruelty as to be the first one among men to seek the life of the Redeemer of the world under the lie of devotion and piety. In his furious rage, he took away the life of the innocent children.

565. From the cave of the Nativity, the three kings went to a lodge inside the town of Bethlehem. They retired to a room where, in an abundance of affectionate tears and aspirations, they spent the greater part of the night, speaking of what they had seen, of the feelings and emotions aroused in each, and of what each had noticed for himself in the divine Child and His Mother. During this conference they were more and more inflamed with divine love, amazed at the majesty and divine brilliance of the Infant Jesus; at the prudence, modesty and reserve of His Mother; at the holiness of Her spouse Joseph, and the poverty of all three; at the humbleness of the place, where the Lord of heaven and earth had wished to be born. The devout kings felt a divine fire, which flamed up in their hearts, and, not being able to restrain themselves, they broke out into passionate sweet affection and acts of great reverence and love. "What is this that we feel? What influence of this great King is it that moves us to such desires and affections? After this, how shall we speak with men? What can we do, who have been instructed in such new, hidden and heavenly mysteries? O greatness of His power unknown to men and concealed under so much poverty! O humility unimaginable for mortals! Would that all

be drawn to it, in order that they may not be deprived of such happiness"!

566. During these divine conversations the Magi remembered the shocking poverty of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their cave, and they decided immediately to send them some gifts in order to show their affection and to satisfy their desire of serving them, since they could not do anything else for them. They sent through their servants many of the presents, which they had already set aside for them, and others which they could buy. Most holy Mary and Joseph received these gifts with humble acknowledgment and they made a return not of empty worded thanks, as other men are normal to make, but many effective blessings. These gifts were used by Mary to give to the poor; for the needy ones were accustomed to receive alms from Her, and, attracted still more by Her sweet words, were habit to come and visit Her. The kings went to sleep in full incomparable joy in the Lord; and in their sleep the Angels advised them as to their journey homeward.

567. On the following day at dawn they returned to the cave of the Nativity in order to offer to the heavenly King the special gifts which they had provided. Arriving they prostrated themselves in deep humility; and opening their treasures, as Scripture relates, they offered Him gold, incense and myrrh. They consulted the heavenly Mother in regard to many mysteries and practices of faith, and concerning matters pertaining to their consciences and to the government of their countries; for they wished to return well instructed and capable of directing themselves to

holiness and perfection in their daily life. The great Lady heard them with exceeding pleasure and She discussed interiorly with the divine Infant concerning all that they had asked, in order to answer and properly to instruct these sons of the new Law. As a Teacher and an instrument of divine wisdom She answered all their questions, giving them such high laws of holiness that they could scarcely part from Her on account of the sweetness and attraction of Her words. However, an Angel of the Lord appeared to them, reminding them of the necessity and of the will of the Lord that they should return to their country. No wonder that Her words should so deeply affect these Kings; for all Her words were inspired by the holy Spirit and full of inspired science regarding all that they had asked and many other matters.

568. The heavenly Mother received the gifts of the Kings and in their name offered them to the Infant Jesus. They themselves became aware of the exalted and heavenly blessings with which Jesus repaid them more than a hundredfold. According to the custom of their country they also offered to the Mother of Jesus some gems of great value; but because these gifts had no mysterious signification and referred not to Jesus, She returned them to the Kings, reserving only the gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. In order to send them away more rejoiced, She gave them some of the clothes in which She had wrapped the infant God; for She neither had nor could have had any greater visible riches for their departure. The three Kings received these clothes with such reverence and admiration that they later enclosed them

in gold and precious stones in order to keep them ever after. As a proof of their value these clothes spread an abundant fragrance that could be smelled within a circle of 1 mile. (Mary Agreda uses a term called a league to describe this distance.) However, only those who believed in the coming of the Messiah into the world were able to perceive it; while the unbelievers smelled nothing. In their own countries the three kings performed great miracles with these relics.

569. The holy Kings also offered to build the Holy Family a house, thus the Family could live more comfortably. The most prudent Mother thanked them for their offers without accepting them. As the three Kings left they asked our Holy Mother from their inmost hearts not to forget them, which She promised and fulfilled; in the same way they spoke to saint Joseph. With the blessing of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, they departed, so moved by tender emotions that it seemed to them they had left their hearts all melted into sighs and tears in that place. They chose another way for their return journey, in order not to meet Herod in Jerusalem; for thus they had been instructed by the Angel on the preceding night. On their departure from Bethlehem the same star appeared in order to guide them home, conducting them on their new route to the place where they had first met, whence each one separated to reach his own country.

570. For the rest of their lives these most fortunate Kings lived up to their responsibility to be kings as true disciples of the Holy Family, governing both their souls and the people of their

countries according to Mary's teaching. By the example of their lives and the knowledge of the Messiah, which they spread about, they converted a great number of souls to the belief in the true God and to the way of salvation. Finally, full of days and virtues, they closed their careers in holiness and justice, having been favored both in life and in death by the Mother of mercy. After dismissing the Kings, the heavenly Queen and saint Joseph spent their time in new songs of praise of the wonders of the Most High, discussing the sayings of the Scriptures and the prophecies of the Patriarchs, which they saw fulfilled one after another in the Infant Jesus. But the most prudent Mother, who profoundly penetrated into the deepest meaning of these high sacraments, remembered them all and treasured them up in Her heart. The holy Angels, who were witnesses of these holy mysteries, congratulated their Queen, that Her most holy Son had been revealed and that Christ had been praised by men; and they sang to Him new songs, magnifying God's mercies performed upon mankind.

TEACHING OF THE MOST HOLY QUEEN MARY.

571. My daughter, great were the gifts which the Kings offered to My most holy Son; but greater still was the affection with which they offered them and the mystery concealed beneath the gold, incense (frankincense) and myrrh. On account of all this they were most acceptable to Christ. I wish that you also offer up similar gifts, thanking Him for

having made you poor in condition and profession. For I assure you, my dear daughter, there is no more acceptable gift to the Most High God than voluntary poverty. There are very few in the world in our days who use well the temporal riches and offer them to their God and Lord with the generosity and love of these holy Kings. The poor of the Lord, so numerous in our day, experience and give witness how cruel and greedy human nature has become; since in their great poverty they are so little supported by the rich. This gross greediness of men offends the holy Angels and saddens the Holy Spirit, since they are forced to witness the human souls degraded and sink in the service of evil greed of gold with all its evil powers. As if all things had been created for personal use of the rich, they keep them to themselves and deprive the poor, their brothers of the same nature and flesh; and denying them even to God, who created and keeps alive all things, and who can give or take it at any time. It is most sorrowful that while the rich might purchase eternal life with their possessions, they abuse them to draw upon themselves damnation.

Lk 16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon (money and goods), so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations.

Brothers, by giving our money to the poor in the name of Jesus this can save us from damnation.

Questions

- 1) The three kings called wise men (magi) were well read in the _____ of the _____. Because of their reading they were called the wise men.
- 2) The three kings were influenced with the belief in the coming of the _____ because of their readings and questioning the Jews.
- 3) The three kings were also of noble character, free from love of _____ and worldly things, which so oppresses, degrades and cuts down the spirits of other rulers.
- 4) On the same night Jesus was born, the wise men were informed of His Birth by their _____ Angels.
- 5) How did the Angels inform the kings?
- 6) After the three kings were informed by the Angels, they prostrated themselves on the ground and humbling themselves to the _____, they adored in spirit the Almighty God.
- 7) The star in which guided the kings to the baby Jesus was created by an _____. This star was no ordinary star but had a light like a brilliant _____ and could be seen during the _____.
- 8) The star lead them to Jerusalem and the kings thought the messiah was _____ there. The kings asked the people in Jerusalem where the Christ child was _____.
- 9) The kings questioning came to the ears of _____, who at that time unjustly reigned in Judea and lived in Jerusalem. The wicked king, panic-stricken at the thought that a more legitimate claim to the throne should have been born, felt much disturbed and outraged by this report.
- 10) Herod called together a meeting of the principal priests and scribes in order to ask them where Christ was to be born according to the prophecies and holy Scriptures. They answered that, according to the words of one of the Prophets Micah, (Micah 5:2) He was to be born in _____.
- 11) The Magi had already been instructed that the Mother of the Newborn was a _____, and that He was the true God and not a son of saint _____.