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Homily at Mass for Feast of the Epiphany

Pope Francis

Christians should go out into the world to follow God but use “holy cunning” to guard against the snares of temptation, Pope Francis said. The pope made the remarks at a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica Jan. 6 on the feast of the Epiphany. In his homily, the pope said that life is a journey, and like the three Wise Men, people are looking for the “fullness of truth and of love that we Christians recognize in Jesus, the light of the world.” Jesus is found by reading the world of God’s creation and the sacred Scripture, which nourishes the soul and “enables us to encounter the living Jesus, to experience him and his love,” the pope said. On life’s journey, we need to be

“This holy ‘cunning’ is also a virtue. It consists of a spiritual shrewdness that enables us to recognize danger and avoid it.”

“attentive, alert and listen to God who speaks to us,” and be prepared when we encounter “darkness, suspicion, fear and jealousy.” This happened to the Magi when they briefly lost sight of the star to Bethlehem and passed through Jerusalem where they encountered King Herod, who was “distrustful and preoccupied with the birth of a frail child whom he thought of as a rival,” the pope said. Jesus wasn’t interested in usurping the king, “a wretched puppet,” the pope said, but in overthrowing the devil. “The Magi were able to overcome that dangerous moment of darkness before Herod, because they believed in the Scriptures,” and believed the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, the pope said. Pope Francis spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation of his homily follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Lumen requirunt lumine.” These evocative words from a liturgical hymn for the Epiphany speak of the experience of the Magi: following a light, they were searching for the Light. The star appearing in the sky kindled in their minds and in their hearts a light that moved them to seek the great light of Christ. The Magi followed faithfully that light that filled their hearts, and they encountered the Lord.

The destiny of every person is symbolized in this journey of the Magi of the East: Our life is a journey, illuminated by the lights that brighten our way, to find the fullness of truth and love that we Christians recognize in Jesus, the light of the world. Like the Magi,

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