



We have seen the star!

Dearest Sisters,

This Christmas I would like to reflect with you on the verse from Matthew's Gospel which sees the Magi in search of the King of the Jews, "**We saw his star at its rising and have come to adore him**" (Mt 2:2).

Strange personages the Magi. They leave their security to seek a path that leads them far away. There is no precise information about them. Almost nothing is known; we only know that they come from the east and follow a star.

They are pilgrims of the Light, the light that illumines every person; the light of which the star is the proclamation and promise. The star. A sign that comes from heaven to indicate that darkness is vanquished forever. The great painter, Van Gogh, wrote that the need for God drove him to go out at night to paint the stars. Yes, because God made us like this, kneaded with a desire for the infinite and oriented, like the magi, towards the stars.

He does not manifest Himself in the power of this world, but addresses us in the humility of His love, a humble love, but also great and strong. The encounter with the Lord is a source of profound joy.

Before Him, the expected of the ages and Lord of the universe, we can prostrate and adore Him as the Magi do, without fear of having the wrong goal just because He manifests Himself to us as a child, a voiceless and powerless creature.

Adoring God means learning to be with Him, to stop and dialogue with Him, feeling that His presence is the truest, the best, the most important of all. Adoring the Lord means declaring before Him that He is the only God of our life, of our history.

The Magi who leave at the rising of the star teach us that in life, we must always start again every day. Faith is like a fascinating, if often difficult, journey always in search of God. We, like the magi, will learn that even in the darkest nights a star shines. It is the star of Jesus that lights up our life.

We have seen the star!

We are at the conclusion of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of our Institute and the star makes me think of an episode in our history.

It was the feast of the Epiphany of 1872 when we saw a star and welcomed the missionary call!

Don Bosco was ill in Varazze and that day he received Fr. Domenico Pestarino and confided to him his dream about the FMA Institute, giving him the notebook of the first Rules. He said to him, "Thus, we can begin what we talked about this summer in Turin. Going to Mornese, gather the Daughters and have them vote to form the Council... Tell them to pray, to take courage. Everything is done for the greater glory of God and in honor of the Virgin. And I will pray to the Lord and the Virgin Mary here from my bed for them and that they will desire to bless the new Institute" (Cronistoria I, 270).

The Cronistoria continues, almost contemplating the fecundity of a sprout of grace that was blossoming that day in Mornese. Let's read:

“In the Father's mind, therefore, the Institute had already arisen, since he called Heaven to bless it and revealed it on the feast which recalls the manifestation of God to the peoples through the Magi. Epiphany of 1872! Let us write this date that marks the birth of Don Bosco's second family in golden letters! Everything is done in silence, in the shadows, but that doesn't make it less important. ... The world knows nothing of it, just as it knew nothing of God's miracle in the hearts of the Magi. Only later will it see the external forms, the modalities necessary for a beautiful work to establish itself among the people. But the Daughters of Don Bosco arise today and bring into the Father's heart the smile of many hopes that will not fade" (Cronistoria I 270-271).

Since that day, the star of hope shines in the Church for young men and women all over the world. Since that day, we have been entrusted with the mission of being stars that shine in the world to illumine our contemporaneity with light and hope and to continue the journey, listening to the words that Pope Francis told us when meeting with the Chapter Members on 22 October of 2021:

“The great responsibility is to collaborate with the creativity of the Holy Spirit, to revisit the charism and ensure that it expresses its vitality today. From this derives true 'youth', because the Spirit makes all things new ... Do not forget the grace of the origins, the humility and smallness of the beginnings that made God's action transparent in the life and in the message of those who, filled with amazement, began this journey. Mary Help of Christians will help you. You are her daughters!”.

With this certainty, we welcome the mystery of Christmas into our lives, into the life of families, of Educating Communities. We entrust to the protection of Mary, Mother and Helper, Queen of Peace, the situations of suffering and difficulty in which our Sisters and Educating Communities find themselves due to war, violence, poverty, trampled rights.

We saw a star! A Light, Jesus, who illumines the future of humanity even in the most hidden places on earth! A Star, Jesus, the true light!

With these sentiments I wish a peaceful Holy Christmas, in the joy and light of contemplating this mystery and in thanksgiving to the Father for his infinite mercy toward a world that yearns more and more for hope and peace.

Merry Christmas!

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