



Prayer in Faith

From Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ

The Shepherds ... They came, they found the Infant and His Mother in poverty greater even than their own. They understood all they were capable of understanding. Their faith was simple, but entire. They adored in the Child, their Saviour, Christ, the Messiah, and departed to their homes joyously, contentedly, spreading everywhere the glorious tidings.

To the Magi, less was granted and more was asked. No oral communication, no direct call, but a star appears, and they think they understand its meaning, that an Infant King is born.

Compelled by conscience only, to work on very indefinite signs, they had to detach themselves from many things -- their kingdoms, their dependents, relations, interests of all kinds, and go forth ... they knew not whither, and scarcely what for. The difficulties were many and great, and called for exceptional courage.

All Jerusalem was troubled at their coming. Political complications might have arisen from stating so openly to Herod the object of their quest -- a newborn King-- but they were undeterred by such considerations and by not finding what they had hoped to find; the quest was apparently ending in faith as it had begun. Yet when they reach the end of their journey they find all, for they find the Child and His Mother ... and they depart fully satisfied ... they have understood the mystery.

(Image of choir in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, taken by Muriel Cameron, RSCJ.)