

In today's Gospel, Matthew 2:13-23, we hear about the flight from Bethlehem to Egypt by Saint Joseph, the Theotokos and Jesus Christ. It was an angel of the Lord who forewarned Saint Joseph in a dream. Herod who was enraged by the three wise men not returning to reveal the location of our Lord and Savior, ordered that all the male children in Bethlehem two years old or younger to be killed. Today we celebrate the 14,000 Holy Innocents who were slain by Herod in Bethlehem.

Dearest ones let us talk about being a pilgrim. Saint John Chrysostom writes that the three wise men came from the East even with the likelihood of danger, bearing gifts because the star guided them, and only in this way, they would voyage. God used that which was familiar to them through condescension. Moreover, it wasn't just any star, but one so bright, so large, that in their awe they followed it to Bethlehem.

We see that the wise men began to be transformed by God's grace the moment they spotted the star. As it is written, on their way back to their homeland they did not return to King Herod, but instead went home by another route never to return to him to reveal that Christ Jesus was born. Why did these wise men do this? For what reason? Their hearts had changed; they were transformed by the Nativity of Christ Jesus.

So who is a pilgrim? Aren't we all pilgrims? Do we all not seek? Dearest ones, can we not also, in our hearts, travel to the place of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in awe of God's great love for us? So that we too, like the wise men can be transformed little by little?

Little by little, we can all become better people, just like the three wise men who allowed God to transform them from astrologers of the stars to wise men in Christ. The star in Bethlehem shined down on the whole world, not only were the wise men transformed by Christ Jesus being born as the Savior of all, but all generations have been transformed to those who seek to know Him.

May this star, dearest ones shine brightly within our hearts. May we always be pilgrims seeking our God. May we be guided by His hand always, to become a better humanity with all honor, glory and worship due to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever, amen.