

Today we celebrate the Epiphany—the day that the wise people found their way to the Christ child. They brought the best gifts that they had to offer—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The story has had all sorts of interpretations—the coming of Gentiles to the Christ where these three gift-bearers represent different races, that any seeker is welcomed into the manger hay to come to this child, that they bring focus to God’s generosity in giving Christ to the world through their own generosity. Some have said they remind us that no one kind of believer has the sole market on the truth of the Gospel—even those who come to the child via a different path are welcomed. It’s a story of God’s unlimited hospitality. These three (or however many there were) hungered for a glimpse of the Christ child and traveled far and long to the dusty humble manger. In a sense they lived into Augustine’s words from his book *Confessions*: “Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee...O Lord.”¹

I want to share with you a meditation on one person in the story who finds rest in a different way—one who hungered for a glimpse of the Christ child for different purposes. It’s a meditation about Herod’s encounter at Bethlehem written by Jean Jones Andersen. It takes us a little deeper into the Matthew text—just beyond our passage and into the actions of Herod when the wise people chose a different route to head home. There is no historical account of Matthew’s story of Herod’s jealous actions, but it certainly causes one to wonder about the things that jealousy and greed harbor vs. the ways generosity unfolds in lives.

Read “Herod” from *Encounters in Bethlehem*.

¹ Augustine, trans. F. J. Sheed, *Confessions*, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), 3.

It's fascinating what story can do for us, no matter what our age. This story of the Magi invites us all into the humble manger. It invites us to find our place in the story. The pathways we have to the manger will be different. Some like Herod have troublesome ways of getting there. Some like the Magi come to know that God welcomes all.

Where do you find yourself at this time in life? Spending a little extra time at the manger might reveal your own epiphany. The invitation is there for each of us.