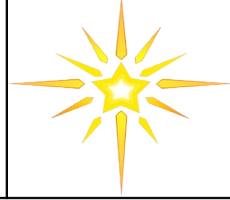


2

The Pointers Mt 2:1-12



In most cultures, one of the games that children play is “hide and seek”, with many variants – tag, sardines, or hidey (in Scotland). There is a lot of fun in finding hidden objects and people! God seems to play ‘hide and seek’ with human beings. Isaiah cries out, “Oh God of Israel, you are a God who lies hidden” (Is 45:15). And the Psalmist prays, “It is your face Oh Lord that I seek, hide not your face from me” (Ps 27:8b,9). This was the situation of the old dispensation. But suddenly there is a surprise in the history of salvation. God is made visible in Jesus.

The same God who put the thirst within us offers also possibilities to fulfil that thirst. He places pointers – landmarks, signposts – that serve to show us the path that we need to take. The magi were led by the star (Mt 2:1-10). The little Samuel in the Old Testament was directed by Eli to recognize the voice of God (1Sam 3:1-10). The two disciples, John (?) and Andrew, were shown by John the Baptist, “Look, there is the lamb of God” (Jn 1:36).

We all need fingers that point at the right direction. We all need John the Baptists in our lives to show us the way. These pointers could be our family, friends, teachers and guides. It could be the Church; and the Word of God. The pointers could be just powerful experiences – stars on our way: moments of consolation during our prayer that give us the foretaste of the fulfilment of our thirst. Sometimes they could be very tragic events, including accidents, sicknesses, disappointments and broken relationships. They could be people put on our way by God, who we need to recognize and journey with. Yes, we all need mentors, spiritual directors and models. If we look at the lives of saints – who the church proposes as our role models, most of them had a spiritual director. Do you have one?

Two tendencies to be avoided on the way in our response to the pointers:

1. *Avoid mistaking map for the territory.* The sign post is not the destination. We shouldn’t get stuck. Be it the Bible, the church, or any spiritual practice – we shouldn’t consider them absolute. Once we do that we might get stuck on the way. If the magi had stayed admiring at the star, they would not have seen the baby!

2. *Avoid pitching the tent:* Last July (2011) I made the 30-day Ignatian spiritual exercise. During one of first days, one of the insights that came to my awareness was: “The experiences of God that I have had is nothing compared to that which God is inviting me to now!” This simply means, we shouldn’t get stuck in the past spiritual experiences (of God). For sure, the memories are important. But God is here and now! During our prayer moments, God offers us moment of consolation. These moments are like the Magi seeing the star! We shouldn’t seek the consolation of God – rather only the God of consolation (St Ignatius)!