

# Pastor's Letter

Dear Church Family,

Fr. Robert Spitzer, PhD is the retired president of Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington. He is the founder and president of the Magis Center of Reason and Faith which promotes understanding of the relatedness between science and faith. I recently listened to a talk given by Fr. Spitzer about a year ago and he shared a really interesting statistic about the belief of scientists in God. He said that according to the Pew Survey of the American Association for the Advancement of Science 51% of all scientists believe in the existence of God. Even more interesting is the fact that younger scientists under the age of 40 are more likely to believe in God than older ones. 66% of scientists under 40 believe in God. He went on to discuss how recent discoveries in physics and the life sciences are leading more and more scientists to become believers. That came as a surprise to me. The common story is that if you value science and reason you will reject belief in God. But that doesn't seem to be the case. Scientists are involved in the search for truth, and the best scientists will follow the truth wherever it leads them, including, it seems, if it leads them to God.

Today the church celebrates the Epiphany of the Lord. We remember how wise men from the east, the Magi, came to Jerusalem looking for a newborn king because of a phenomenon they observed in the sky, a star. They followed where the evidence led them and came to Bethlehem where their expectations of an earthly king were overturned by their encounter with the Holy Family. A baby born in a place where cattle were kept was not what they were looking for but being seekers after truth they did not allow their notions of how they expected things to be cloud their vision of how things really were. They were acting like good scientists. The star led them to Jesus and they believed.

Fr. Spitzer's statistics and the story of the Magi are good reminders to us that most people really are looking for the truth. Some people have an agenda and will never be convinced, but for the most part people really want to know the meaning of life and how best to live it. This is where you and I come in. Reason can lead people to the doorstep of faith. Conversations with believers who are welcoming and willing to take their questions seriously can help people who are seeking the truth to open their hearts to a personal encounter with the Lord. God has revealed himself to us who believe so that we can help to reveal him to others who need to know him. As the prophet Isaiah says in our first reading, "See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears his glory.

Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance." May the minds and hearts of all who sincerely seek the truth be enlightened by the one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott