DAY 21

MATTHEW 2:7–8

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

Deception at its finest. Herod was a master of his craft, but he could not hide the truth of the matter: What was most important to him was being threatened. The word about this newborn King of the Jews had spread fast. Matthew 2:3 goes as far as to say that Herod "was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him."

As we read yesterday, for Herod, the arrival of Jesus was not good news. The prophecy foretold another kind of ruler who would lead like a shepherd. Jesus' Kingdom would be a topsy-turvy reversal of the power structure. The high and mighty would be brought low, and those of low status would be elevated—a direct threat to someone whose power lies in accumulation, influence, status, and wealth.

God's arrival, Advent, is meant to stir us up. It's meant to shake us from our need to accumulate worldly things and awaken us to a different reality—one where true power and authority are not derived from influence, status, or wealth.

The truth is clear—Herod had no intention to honor the Christ-child because he was not willing to yield his life, his status, his influence, or his power.

REFLECT

The four tenets of Advent Conspiracy are there to help us avoid "the temptation of more" so that we can be fully present with Christ and those we love. Are there things in your life that keep you from yielding to Christ? Are there practices or habits that keep you from fully honoring the Christ-child?

PRAY

Immanuel, stir up within me the desire to give myself and my life fully to you and your Kingdom, where true power lies in humility and simplicity. Remove from within me the temptation to accumulate, and grant me the willingness to worship, serve, share, and love so that I might fully honor you. Amen.