DAY 22

MATTHEW 2:9–12

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

On a morning with a cloudless sky and a gentle offshore breeze, I was surfing with some friends when a pod of dolphins started swimming and jumping all around us. Some of the dolphins were so close I could reach out and touch them. Feelings of awe, joy, and some fear rose up in all of us.

Sometimes I go out surfing when I'm feeling stuck or I'm praying for God to speak. I go into creation and try to listen better and notice God.

As I came in and was walking to my car, a woman was smiling at me and asked with excitement, "Did you get to surf with the dolphins?" I told her I did. She let out a sigh mixed with glee and envy. Then she said something that surprised me: "Did they have a message?"

Now I will admit, when that woman on the beach asked me if the dolphins had

a message for me, my reaction was to laugh and brush it off. Until I got back to thinking about this text. Matthew's Gospel highlights the ways in which the created world pointed to the glory of God's arrival.

Consider the magnitude of Christ's Incarnation. This news was so big it took prophets to foretell it, angels to declare it, and stars in the heavens to proclaim it. This was a message of universal impact and the universe itself was responding. As the psalmist declares in Psalm 19:1, the "heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork."

Of course, as part of creation, the Magi heard the message and responded. In fact, there is a poetic reciprocity with the gifts they bring to Jesus. Gold, frankincense, myrrh. These are gifts based in creation, developed with human creative expression, and then given back to the One who was there as God created in the beginning.

In this season of Advent, perhaps a way we can engage in a more full expression of worship is to take time to notice the ways creation continues to proclaim God's glory. The question becomes, "Do I have the eyes and ears to notice?"

REFLECT

Is there a way you can engage with God's creation today? As you do so, in what ways might the created world also be anticipating the arrival of Christ?

PRAY

I praise you, Father, for you are our Almighty Creator. I thank you, Jesus, for your presence and promised return. Guide me, Holy Spirit, as I long for my life to join in with all of creation in proclaiming your glory. Amen.