



“May the Child Jesus be the Star that Guides You”

- Diaries of St Pio -

**The Epiphany of the Lord
6 January 2026**

Reflection: Mgr Daniel McHugh

“We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship the Lord.” (Mt 2:2)

This year I was particularly struck by the address of King Charles III on Christmas Day. It began by making reference to the “Pilgrimage” he and the Queen made to Rome and their meeting with Pope Leo. He said “we prayed with Pope Leo in an historic moment of spiritual unity. Together, we celebrated the jubilee theme, “Pilgrims of Hope”. He went on: “Pilgrimage is a word less used today, but it has a particular significance for our modern world, and especially at Christmas. It is about journeying forward, into the future, while also journeying back to remember the past and learn from its lessons”. On his mind, as he looked back, was the commemoration of 80 years since the end of the Second World War; he spoke of the sacrifice made especially by so many young men and women and

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the way communities came together in the face of such great challenge: “These were the values which have shaped our country and the Commonwealth. As we hear of division, at home and abroad, they are the values of which we must never lose sight.” They are lessons for the future of society.

He then went on to speak of “journeying as a constant theme of the Christmas story.” The holy family made a journey to Bethlehem and arrived homeless without proper shelter. The wise men made a pilgrimage from the east to worship at the cradle of Christ; and the shepherds journeyed from fields to town in search of Jesus, the saviour of the world.” Reflecting on our world and the fact that it “seems to spin ever faster, our journeying may pause to quieten our minds – in T S Eliot’s words “at the still point of the turning world – and allow our souls to renew - ” a reference to a core concept in his poem *Four Quartets*, symbolising a moment of timeless, central stillness amidst constant motion, a spiritual idea that we can make our own as we stand before the Crib on the Solemnity of the Epiphany.

Charles concluded his address with these words: “Of course, the greatest pilgrimage of all is the journey we celebrate today – the story of the One who ‘came down to Earth from Heaven’, ‘whose shelter was a stable’ and who shared his life with ‘the poor and the lowly’. It was a pilgrimage with a purpose, heralded by the angels, that there should be peace on Earth.” That prayer for peace and reconciliation – for ‘doing to others as we would have them do to us’ –

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which rang out over the fields over Bethlehem more than two thousand years ago, still reverberates from there and around the world today. “It is a prayer for our times, and our communities too, as we journey through our lives.”

The address of King Charles came from the heart and speaks to us as we come to the end of the Christmas Season, the end of the Jubilee Year, and look towards 2026. I found the prayer of St Pio of Pietrelcina quoted at the beginning of this Reflection (whose life impacted on a pilgrimage made with friends from my former parish and elsewhere to Puglia for the Jubilee Year) very appropriate. As we go with the wise men to visit the Child in the manger let us embrace it: “May the Child Jesus be the star that guides you.”

As we stand or kneel before the Child Jesus the words of the Responsorial Psalm urge us to join in the stillness that Eliot speaks of as we reflect on the Response: “All the nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.” We may also consider what gifts we offer for the Child after the example of the wise men. The commentary from Loyola Press – Sunday Connection – reads: “We have come to consider the gifts they bring as a foreshadowing of Jesus’ role in salvation. We believe the meaning of the gifts to be Christological: Gold is representative of Jesus’ kingship. Frankincense is a symbol of his divinity because priests burned the substance in the Temple. Myrrh, which was used to prepare the dead for burial, is offered in anticipation of Jesus’ death.”

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Fr Joseph Pollard in his Homily for the Feast says “It’s time for us to make our journey of faith to the infant, following his star and not our own. It’s time to surrender the darkness of our false values to the light of his true values. It’s time to place at his feet the instruments of our black arts that are the work of darkness we do against conscience, God and neighbours.”

I conclude with these words of St Pio posted on the Feast of St Silvester, the eve of the New Year 2026: “The palm of glory is reserved for the battle with courage until the end. Let us therefore begin this year our holy battle: God will assist us and crown us with eternal triumph.”

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