

## Do Not Be Troubled

The Mass readings each Sunday are intended to guide us through the upcoming week as well as inform and influence the whole of our lives. The Gospel reading for the Epiphany of the Lord (Matthew 2:1-12) invites us to this possibility. As I read this Gospel, my mind kept returning to the line stating that Herod was greatly troubled and the puzzling phrase *“and all Jerusalem with him.”* I pondered why and how all of Jerusalem would be troubled by a newly born infant king. It is difficult to take this phrase literally, at least at this point in Jesus’ life. We clearly see how all of Jerusalem was troubled by the time Jesus suffers his Passion and death 33 years later. Maybe this was Saint Matthew’s way of forecasting the troubling change Jesus would bring.

This phrase clearly intends more than a literal meaning as cultural change was needed throughout all of Judea and beyond, not just in Jerusalem. This is an enduring truth still today. Most people who do not yet know Jesus in a personal sense are troubled with why he has come into this world. This is an invisible sense of trouble, but it certainly can be felt. Jesus is a counter-cultural person and he continuously offers a message of love and respect for all life, countering the thrumming rhythm of greed, power and lust.

As people come to know about him, they have to face the truth that change is needed within themselves and throughout their culture. Many people will not accept this need for change, so they will always be troubled. Some of us do accept this need for change and eventually begin to see the light of our own selves at work in this world. We begin to feel a sense of peace. As we grow closer and closer to the Light of Truth, we are more fully transformed to reflect his love in the conduct of our own lives. Eventually we will be so close to him that we no longer just reflect his love, but we are ignited by his love. So let us not be troubled any longer. Fully embrace the fire of his love and let it shine from within you!

Peace,

Marc Barrett