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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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have indicated the house distinctly, unless it were near the earth. And, as he [Chrysostom] observes, this does not seem *fitting* to a star, but ‘of some power endowed with reason.’ ... some invisible force made visible under the form of a star’... (be it) the Holy Ghost, ... (or) the angel who, under a human form, appeared to the shepherds, under the form of a star” (cf. also *In Matth.* II, lect. 1).

#### b) A star formed by angels

Cornelius a Lapide, whose commentary to the Gospels is accessible in English translation (!) sums up nine reasons. In his list he mentions that “1. This star surpassed all others...; 2. In its material... it was aerial...; 3. In place: for others are in the firmament; this was in the atmosphere...; 4. In motion ...; 5. In time...; 6. In duration ...; 7. In size ...; 8. In being inconstant ... (and finally) 9. In splendor: in which surpassed all the other stars.” (Cornelius a Lapide, *In Matth.*, ch. I, v.16 and 18; see the English edition: *The Great Commentary of Cornelius Lapide – The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew*, vol. I, Loreto Publications, Fitzwilliam, NH, 2008, 25-26; cf. pages 12-22 and 25-34). This brought him to the conclusion: “This star was a new meteor formed by the angels out of air, and filled with an immense light, and moved by an angel, like the pillar of fire and cloud, which guided the Hebrews through the desert to the promised land.”

#### 4. Dear brothers in the Priesthood!

However this phenomenon may be explained, it is once more a sign that God who calls us has all creation at his disposition to serve his providence in the guidance of our lives. The holy angels who administer the entire physical universe “below them” have many means to help us. We do not always need to know *how* they lead us. Let us call for their help, ask that they make themselves comprehensible when necessary, and that we might never be a hindrance to them.

Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC

ASSOCIATION OF PRIESTS  
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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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## Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

“We have seen his star” (Mt 2:2)

Vol. XVIII, February, 2012

#### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

The next text on the angels in the gospel of St. Mathew, materially speaking, stands in reference to St. Joseph: “An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream” (Mt 2:13). However, Pope Benedict XVI – with the words of Saint John Chrysostom, – reminds us “that Scripture ‘needs the revelation of the Spirit, so that by discovering the true meaning of the things enclosed therein, we can reap abundant benefits’.” To understand this, “Saint Gregory the Great nicely emphasizes ... ‘He himself [the Holy Spirit] created the words of the holy Testaments, he himself revealed their meaning’.” (Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 16.2; cf. 29 and 37). Consequently, we have to say: The Word of God is more than letters, and therefore, there might be more references on the angels than our Computers nowadays find by a word-search.

#### 1. The Angels lead to Jesus

It is a surprising fact, that all those who found their way to their Incarnate God were lead there by an angel. To verify this, we can look at the gospels of St. Luke and St. Mathew, each of whom transmitted events surrounding the Incarnation of the Son of God.

It starts with the annunciation of the precursor John the Baptist through the angel Gabriel to his father Zechariah in the temple, then the annunciation through the same archangel Gabriel to Our Lady which lead to the *Verbum caro factum est* (Lk 1:5-20 and 26-38), followed by the annunciation of this mystery to St. Joseph (Mt 1:18-25). Then at the birth in Bethlehem, a “multitude of the heavenly host” gave testimony of the birth of the Savior to the shepherds who decided: “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing” and they found what was told to them (Lk 2:8-18).

And, when Mary and Joseph “brought him [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ... a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, ... inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple ... blessed God and said, ‘...mine eyes have seen thy salvation’” (Lk 2:22,25,27-30; cf. Lk 1:41). We often saw already that the Holy Spirit acts through his servants, the holy angels; St. Thomas says, they are sometimes not mentioned because of the “excellence of the manifestation” (St. Thomas Aqu., *In Matth.*, ch. II, lect. 1).

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Every one, of whom the gospel reports their coming to the Divine Child, is guided there by God’s grace and the interference of His heavenly servants, the holy angels.

### 2. The star and the angel

Is it really surprising if one asks, if not the last remaining group who came to the Divine Child in Bethlehem, the “Wise men from the East”, were not also guided by the heavenly servants of God? When these men arrived in Jerusalem, they spoke about a star which indicated for them the birth of the King of Judah: “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him’.” (Mt 2:1-2)

#### a) Guidance through a star

What “star” did they see? What does this star indicate?

We find in Sacred Scripture references to the physical stars or planets in the universe: “The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven... The name of the star is Wormwood” (Rev 8:10-11; cf. Rev 9:1-2 and 1 Cor 15:41).

But “star” stands in Scripture also as a symbol for spiritual reality. So wrote St. John these words of Jesus: “I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star” (Rev 22:16). This reference can be found more often (cf. as the “star” coming “forth out of Jacob”, Num 24:17; and explicitly as the “Morning Star”, 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 2:28). But it is also used to describe the angels, as the first one, “Day Star, son of Dawn!” who has fallen (cf. Is 14:12-13; cf. Acts 7:43). angels of the seven churches. This observation should at least open the possibility that the “star” which guided the wise men could mean an angel who directed them to the crib as all the others were guided there through an angel.

#### b) Guidance through an angel

To see this possibility more clearly recall the guidance which God granted His Chosen people when they left Egypt. Regarding that adventure it is reported, that “the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people” (Ex 13:21-22). It is scarcely possible that a pillar of cloud would stay firmly fixed in one spot throughout an entire day; and it is still less likely that it move from before to behind and even stands there: it moves and stands. What explanation do we find for that? Scripture itself offers it saying, just a bit further: “The angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the

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pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night” (Ex 14:19-20).

Does such phenomenon not lead us to the “star” who guided the wise man from afar the small place as the “stable of Bethlehem” was, and more so, disappearing before Jerusalem, but shortly afterwards appearing again ?

### 3. The Angel and the star

“Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem... When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him”. To identify the mystery of this star, it is fitting to add the further detail that they were “warned in a dream not to return to Herod,” so that “they departed to their own country by another way” (Mt 2:8-12). This is a form of guidance which we observed and will again observe in the life of St. Joseph, where the “angel” communicated with him “in a dream” (cf. Mt 1:20 and 2:13,19,22).

Herewith, we should be prepared for the testimony of the Fathers who tell us: Yes, this star they saw was moved by an angel or even a form of his manifestation.

#### a) It is not a normal star

Let’s hear St. Thomas Aquinas who is known as the one who transmits us the Fathers.

He asked: “Whether the star which appeared to the Magi belonged to the heavenly system?” (Summa Theol., p. III, 1. 36, a. 7). He answers with St. John Chrysostom:

“I answer that, as Chrysostom says (Hom. VI in Matth.), it is clear, for many reasons, that the star which appeared to the Magi did not belong to the heavenly system. First, because no other star approaches from the same quarter as this star... Secondly, from the *time* [at which it was seen]. For it appeared not only at night, but also at midday: and no star can do this, not even the moon. Thirdly, because it was *visible* at one time and hidden at another... Fourthly, because its *movement* was not continuous, but when the Magi had to continue their journey the star moved on; when they had to stop the star stood still; as happened to the pillar of a cloud in the desert. Fifthly, because it indicated the virginal Birth, not by remaining aloft, but by coming down below. For it is written (Mt 2:9) that ‘the star which they had seen in the east went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was.... But it could not