What do you do when you hear that a shimmering dream has woken to bright reality?

Good morning. It is Epiphany Day, which marks the day the three wisemen finally made it to the resting place of the Holy Family. You see, they were not there the first day of Jesus’ birth, nor the second day. In fact, traditionally we think it took several long, difficult days for the wisemen to reach Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They were strangers, you know, from far away, where the prophecy of Jesus’ birth was so worn out by retelling, it was practically a whisper. Who do you think they met during those days of travel? And how do you think they explained themselves?

These were wise men, powerful and wealthy, and they knew enough about the stars and astronomy that they could navigate by the sky, instead of by map. Most people who traveled at that time used the roads created by the Roman Empire, a vast web of interlocking, well constructed, and safe routes throughout the western lands. But where the wisemen came from -- there were no Roman roads. Instead of looking down at the road to travel, they had to look up to heaven. So they traveled into the wilderness, following the light of the star’s hope, to see this new king born in Bethlehem.

Surely they met people along the way, and surely they shared their revelation -- their epiphany, their hope -- of the star’s meaning with others. Why then, did they show up alone? What stopped those other people from coming along to see the King of Kings? Maybe, maybe the others were busy with chores, or work. Maybe they were afraid. It is hard to be brave enough to follow a star to a land of strangers and wilderness, instead of a well worn path.

...But how do you think the wisemen felt -- sharing their hopes with others, but no one following them? How would you feel, if you shared a dream with a friend, but no one believed you? Would you feel sad? Mad? Hurt? Scared? Lonely? How would you feel?

We know the wisemen shared their Epiphany with the imperial King of Bethlehem -- Herod. A jealous and prideful man, when Herod learned of Jesus’ birth, he demanded that the wisemen return to tell him where Jesus was found, lying that he wished to worship Jesus, too. But the wisemen knew something was wrong -- God sent them a dream revealing that Herod wanted to snuff out this bright rival king. Herod did not want to compete against the King of Kings and the Priest of Priests in his own land.

How would you feel, then? Having shared your greatest hope with a trusted leader, you find out that your trust could lead to the death of your dream. Would you feel hurt? Panic? Anger? Worry? Guilt?

But the wisemen…the wiseman met their King. They followed their star and saw their greatest dream in the brightness of reality: a savior come for the world. They did not return to Herod, but chose another way home, wandering back to into the dark wilderness, believing they left the light behind. What they could not know is that in their wandering, the wisemen brought the light with them, marked forever by their faith and hope in a world of doubters and destroyers.

So, as human beings in this bright and wondrous world -- what stars have you been too busy to follow? What light have you let be snuffed out? If the wiseman teach us anything, it’s that we need no maps nor roads to follow the hopes that God gives us, and that joy waits at the end of our faithful journey. “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.”

Amen.