

GOSPEL PEARLS

Jesus came to give not take away

SCHEGGE DI VANGELO

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After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come a

leader who will shepherd my people Israel.' Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward, and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way. (Matthew 2: 1-12)

The light of the star that leads the wise men of the East to adore Jesus, represents symbolically the light of God's grace. The problem is that some men choose to follow it, while others unfortunately do not, as in Herod's case. This is due to the fear some people have of losing the freedom to follow their own conscience. They know they would have to follow God's voice instead of their own comfortable opinion. Whereas those who follow the light do so because they have experienced that the presence of the Lord always enriches them because Jesus came to give, not to take away. For example, He did not come to Herod to take away the dominion over his kingdom, but to offer salvation to his soul. The three wise men offer gifts to Jesus, but then return home with their hearts enormously enriched. At least today try not to be attached to material goods and make an effort to follow God's will with joy and generosity. Like the three wise men you will not be left without your reward.