

# the 'second' sign



This beautiful carving appears on a Romanesque capital in Autun Cathedral, in the centre of France. It was carved by a man named Gislebertus (we know this because it has his signature). The embroidered blanket seems to move in harmony with the face, halo, sleeves and wings of the Angel in one graceful, circular movement. With one finger he points to the star, with the other finger he touches the hand of one of the kings, who opens his eyes.

At Christmas there are **two signs**: the **child** wrapped in swaddling clothes and the rising **star**. They are 'signs'- that is, they point to Christ and to the Christians. They have a lot in common. First of all, the child and the star are both **small**. To become a Christian is to become little, renouncing being self-sufficient and learning to depend on God the Father on every-thing. The infant and the star are both **silent**. To become Christians is to become contemplative, walking in the night of faith, in silence, following Another. A small child in a cave and a tiny star in a starry night are **easily missed out**. To become a Christian is to become a prophet, able to recognise what is really important and life-giving in the midst of so many other more attractive things which surround our life.

It is 'still' Christmas! Let us receive all the graces of this Holy Day. Come to Mass on **Wednesday 6th January**, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. Receive the 'second sign' of Christmas. We need the small child and we need the rising star in order to live as Christians in this new year, rejoicing with the shepherds of Bethlehem and the Wise Men of the East. **Merry Christmas** (for a 'second' time!).

*In manus.*

Father Ivano