

(See also 5/6 January, and 25 July)

1 The Wise Men came from the lands that are to the East of Palestine. One of the main routes was called “the Incense Road” because merchants travelled along it with expensive incense and myrrh, sometimes exchanging them for gold.

2 **FRANKINCENSE** (often simply called “incense”) is a gum that comes from a tree. When added to a flame or very hot charcoal, sweet-smelling smoke comes off and rises in the air. One of the psalms in the Bible talks of “*my prayer rising before you, Lord, like incense.*” Sometimes in church, incense is burned as a sign of prayer and offering. Incense is often used at funerals, reminding us in prayer that the ordinary person is also very special.

3 If **GOLD** stands for the special things in life, and **MYRRH** represents the sorrow and difficulties, then **INCENSE** can stand for something in-between. The *ordinary* things of life can become *special* (depending on my attitude and how I go about them) - such ordinary things as:

- getting up;
- cooking, eating, and clearing up after meals;
- housework;
- going to school or work;
- helping somebody who doesn't seem grateful.

4 All these “ordinary” things of life I can transform by a positive attitude.

5 *Let us pray:*

**Lord, as I offer you  
all that is ordinary  
and everyday in my life,  
I ask you  
to give me the power of your Spirit**

**that I may transform each day  
by living with a positive attitude,  
looking for the best  
in people and situations.**

**Inspire me to live in your presence  
every day**

**so that I may share your outlook  
and do the ordinary things of life  
in an extraordinary way.**

**May this, Lord, my prayer today,  
rise before you**

**like the burning of incense.**

**Amen.**

6 There is a saying:

*“Wise men followed Jesus.  
People who are wise still do.”*

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in  
*'Praying Each Day of the Year'*  
a 3-volume book  
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine  
to research this topic further.

This material is part of  
the prayer and education website  
of the De La Salle Brothers  
in Great Britain:  
[www.prayingeachday.org](http://www.prayingeachday.org)