

THE HEAVENS SING OF GOD

By John M. Scott, S.J.

When darkness falls from the wings of night, look up at the heavens full of stars overhead, white and topaz and misty red.

Heaped high in the bowl of night are rubies, garnets, jade, amethysts, diamonds — precious gems offered by the God of time and space to speak of His beauty, His power, His love.

Stars that sequin the evening sky glitter like jewels of Indian Princes, the diamonds from South African mines, and the scintillating products of the gem cutters of Amsterdam. From moon-touched pine cones to star-pinned infinitude, the heavens speak of God.

The Milky Way shows stars poised pale on the fringes of space, and gathering fire in frail, pink flames. Overhead swings the “drinking cup” of the heavens, the Big Dipper. Its seven stars have Arabic names that glitter with all the fascination and romance of the mystic East: Alkaid, Mizar, Alioth, Megrez, Phad, Dubhe and Mirak.

Flung in generous handfuls across the velvet black of night are gems dazzling beyond even Sinbad’s most fabulous dreams.

There are bright Algol, beloved of camel drivers, and blue Denebola, and Vega, the pale sapphire. Mighty Rigel blazes with bluish-white, a jewel made for a king! Betelgeuse glows moody as an opal, while lovely Aldebaran blossoms like a pale ruby in the distant sky.

The golden blur of light shimmering just south of overhead is the Pleiades, the seven sisters of heaven, sending forth a soft, sweet radiance. Many a night you see the Pleiades rising through the mellow shade, then glittering like a swarm of fireflies caught in a silver braid.

Watching the bright stars wheeling far overhead, you hear the story of their birth. They tell of

the great God who simply said: “Let there be light,” and light was made.”

In the crisp and chilly month of December when the stars that oversprinkle all the heavens sparkle like newly minted silver coins, the constellation known as Orion provides a feast for the eyes and wonderment at Mintaka, Alnilam and Alnitak. These are the three silver stars that sparkle in the sword of Orion, fabled hunter of the starry skies.

As you watch the stars march, stately and still, up the dome of heaven like a great hill, you suddenly become aware that you are honored to be witness of so much majesty.

The nightly pageant of the stars has thrilled and comforted the hearts of people through many long centuries. From the plains of ancient Israel, David, king of song, looked up at the stars and sang of them on his harp.

St. Joseph, man of prayer, saw the great stars leap to their vigils the night he took Mary and the Child and fled into Egypt. That night, indeed, the words of the prophet rang true: “And the stars have given light in their watches. They were called and

they said: ‘Here we are.’ And with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them.”

How often on a mid-summer’s evening, Christ, when He was a boy, and young man, living in Nazareth, must have turned His eyes to the calm, brilliant beauty of the stars. His eyes were bright with the radiance of them.

The next time you see the stars flaming high over the tall roofs of huddled cities, or mirrored in the smooth surface of placid lakes, or glittering in tranquil splendor over the vast sweep of prairie or mountain top, remember that these are the very stars upon which Christ once gazed. What a thought there is here for our consolation. **W**

