

Homily for the Epiphany of the Lord

January 4-5, 2020

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6, Matthew 2: 1-12

Preacher: Gee Gee Micoli

Haven't we all from time to time gazed up at the stars? They appear brighter away from city lights or during the dark winter evenings when the earth is farthest from the sun. I ponder how ships found their way just using the stars as their compass or how Magi could travel to an unknown destination using only a star in the sky. What can we learn from these travelers, these "Men from the East?"

The appearance of a heavenly body to note the birth or death of an important individual was widely accepted in ancient times. These men may have been astrologers or astronomers, maybe from Babylon, who followed the movement of the stars to indicate major events. Or as the term "Magi" suggests, these individuals may have possibly been from Persia with the power to interpret dreams. Most telling was that these men did not know where this foretold King of the Jews was to be born so they are considered to be Gentiles rather than Jewish.

We do know these men traveled a long distance without knowing where they were going or what they would find. Upon arrival, they paid homage to this young child, the King of the Jews. In simpler terms, they bowed or prostrated themselves before Jesus and presented him with costly gifts, gestures appropriate in the presence of God or King.

So what stars do we use for our own travels through life as people of God? Are we capable of traveling without knowing our destination or purpose? What or who are our guiding stars? Are we willing to pay homage to our Lord when we arrive? Sometimes God calls us to places we would prefer not to go. Will we heed that call?

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul tells us, "the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." These Magi are more than three wise men. They represent *all* Gentiles. Epiphany is a celebration of God preparing the world

for the gift of this newborn king to *all* people of the world. All of God's children are given this gift of Jesus, the Christ.

Even more, do we believe that the little light of Christ is inside each of us? Do we let that light shine for others to see? Do we allow others to help our little light to shine brighter? Right now, some of our leaders have created a darkness through their selfish decisions. The plague of abuse where powerful men abused children is too painful to even comprehend. Although appropriate to walk away and not look back, we must remember that this is *our* Church they have tainted and desecrated by their selfish deeds!

No, we can't walk away! We need to gather and rally around the good people who come together in Christ's name. We need to look for those little lights in the hearts of so many thousands of good, honorable and faithful servants who reach out to those in need, pick up those who have stumbled while trying to do their very best and especially touch those who need to see our little lights to give them hope.

My hope is being restored as I watch men be excused from their lofty positions because they have plagued our church with their ambition, deceit, selfishness and self-perpetuation. This is huge and gives us all hope!

We have to stick together and pray together during this time of Darkness in our Church. We need to pray for Pope Francis. We, *all* of us, need to find Christ at this dark time. In this darkness, our lights can and will be seen! We can be for others the stars in the sky. Please don't turn away disgusted and defeated; someone needs your light to guide them just like the star that guided the Magi to our newborn King!