

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Although it falls on January 6th we are observing the Feast of the Epiphany this Sunday. We celebrate the arrival of the Magi and their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. I would also like to give each of you a small gift – a gift of realizing the presence of God...right here...right now. The gift I'm going to give you is about ten seconds of silence, about ten seconds of stillness and all you have to do during those ten seconds is realize that God is present. We are so busy in our lives that we rarely take the time to be quiet and realize God is there. Amazingly, even when we go to church we still don't take a lot of time for stillness and in that stillness feel the presence of God. So here's your gift...

Sometimes we read the newspaper, listen to the news on the radio, watch current events on television and we wonder where is God in this world of ours. In the long daily litany of pain, sorrow, suffering, dishonesty, death, greed...where is God?

Today we celebrate Epiphany. Epiphany means to reveal, to show, or to make known. The enduring insight from the earliest days of Israel to our own modern Christianity is that God is not remote from us; God is actively involved...God cares...God is concerned. So where's God?

God is present in the epiphanies of our life each day. Perhaps we think of these epiphanies only in one way– the good and nice events of our day. I stand on a beach and watch a perfect sunset and say to myself "yes, there is a God". I receive a gift of forgiveness from a friend and say to myself "yes, there is a God".

However, as believers we know that God comes to us, the essence of God is revealed, not in the magnificent and the awe-inspiring but rather in the mystery of the crib and the cross. The depth of God's being is made visible in the vulnerability of a child and in the perfect weakness of a man on a cross.

You don't need to go to Sizewell Beach and look out across the North Sea to experience God. We find God in the sacrament of everyday life. We encounter God in trials, sufferings, joys, triumphs, hopes, fears, defeats and successes that come to us each day.

- ...when our best efforts at work go unappreciated, God is present.
- ...when we make an "A" in a difficult class at school, God is present.
- ...when our child is born, God is present.
- ...when our parent dies, God is present.

On those mornings when we wake up, sit on the edge of the bed, rub our eyes, think of the problems we face, worry whether our life has any real meaning, and wonder if there is even really a God...God is present. The epiphanies of life are not just about us.

God is present in the way we serve our neighbour. God is forever the beggar outside our gate, the victim left on the side of the road and the voice of those who have no one to plead for their needs. We are not just called to be sensitive to God's presence within our own lives but we are also called to extend God's presence through our care for others. Each of us is called to be a living epiphany and a sacrament of God's love to the world around us.

- ...when we reach into our pocket and give to the poor, God is present.
- ...when we hug our child, God is present.
- ...when we work to correct an injustice, God is present.
- ...when we pray with a friend in the hospital, God is present.
- ...and in a very special way, when we meet together and share bread and wine, God is present.

God is with us. Sometimes all we have to do is take the time to open our eyes and see...open our ears and hear...open our hearts and feel the presence. May we all see and hear and feel the epiphanies of God in our lives this day and in each day to come.

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth:
mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.