

Feast of Epiphany

A husband asked his wife, "Why would God give the wise men a star to guide them?" She replied, "Because God knows men are too proud to ask directions."

Dear Friends,

Today we remember the Feast of Epiphany which means manifestation or appearance. This feast confirms that God has manifested himself to people differently at all the times. Every year we read the same Gospel from the Gospel of Matthew where the Magi from the east come to venerate with the gifts. The Magi's gifts they brought signify royalty, kingship and his divine and human nature who will die for the people.

God has revealed himself so many ways. I give you three examples from the Old Testament. After the initial call of Abraham, Abraham was visited by the Lord. (Genesis 18:1-2) the story goes where he was promised to have a child. Secondly, God manifested himself to Moses (Ex 3:1-10) when a bush was burning, but not consumed. God commissioned Moses to be the deliverer of Israelites. Thirdly, young Samuel was visited by the Lord. Three times God called and the youth went to his mentor Eli (1 sam 3:1ff). In each of these cases, God was instructing, challenging, and providing a manifestation of God's presence in the world.

There are two examples I can quote from the New Testament in the book of Acts of the Apostles. 1) people understood the Apostle's speech in their own languages(Acts 1: 2-13). 2) Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-15). Catechism of the catholic church no. 528 talks about it in detail.

In our lives, we heard the story of many people who had manifestations of God in their lives. I can give three examples of people in our own times from our churchTree. 1. St. Mother Therese through her charity, and we all know how she was transformed. 2. St. Oscar Romero for his courage and valor to stand up for basic human rights. 3. Dorothy Day and her encounter with French émigré Peter Murphy. Let us ask ourselves how have we encountered God in our lives and in our faith?

The Epiphany of Jesus brought unity and equality to the world. The Wise men and the shepherds could come to visit him. The organized religious leadership like scribes and priests didn't want to recognize Jesus' manifestation, then by their personal glory they were able to determine exact time and location of Jesus' birth. In God's eyes everyone is equal. No one is allowed to build a roadblock.

Jesus is born inside of a religious tradition, Judaism, and his birth is announced to that faith-community in a manner that benefits religion by supernatural revelation, namely, by the angels. But those outside of that faith-tradition need another way to get to know of his birth, and so his birth is announced to them through nature, astrology, through the stars. The wise men see a special star appear in the sky and begin to follow it, not knowing exactly where or to what it will lead.

Another point to reflect on is that we have no idea what happened to those wise men afterwards. Once they have given all their gifts, they leave everything safely in his hands. We have similar reference in the scripture Simeon, Anna the prophetess at the temple. Simeon was revealed that he would not die until he saw Christ. When we surrender ourselves to God, he will take care of everything. Herod saw him as a threat and wise men saw him a blessing. What is our reaction to a new life? A new revelation?