

Fr. Brad Neely

Epiphany of the Lord

Sts Peter & Paul – WB, Gville, Nezp: Jan 03, 2010

Is 60:1-6; Eph 3: 2-3a. 5-6; Mt 2: 1-12

As we progress through our Christmas season, we move from the *incarnation* of God in the flesh---the *birth* of Jesus, to his epiphany---appearance, revealing, presentation---his **manifestation**.

Remember, the One who is manifested is *Emmanuel*---"God with us"---

The Magi-- Wise Men, who are not Jews,

follow the star to the place where the child is, and, "*opened their treasures and offered him gifts*

of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

As we know, these gifts specifically relate to the true identity of the child who receives them:

*the Magi offered the *incense to the God* before them,

**myrrh to the man* before them,

*and *gold to the king* before them.

God....man....and king.

We have been given a divine epiphany, which God was pleased to present to us.

When we are given a gift, we usually unwrap it.

It is called a response.

It is thought by some that "the departure of the Magi

from their homelands, as soon as they saw the star, has always been a symbol of the *response of faith*."

Joining the Magi, then,

the feast of the Epiphany should draw *us* further into our journey of faith.

What's to stop us?

Well, we can stop ourselves.

Did any of you ever come to Mass, where it crossed your mind,

"what am I doing, really?"

"Is all this too incredible to believe?"

What if the Magi had said:

"this *does sound* a bit incredible,

and to top that, we have to travel to check it out!

Why don't we just stay here

and throw together a clam-bake tonight.

There is something, though, that spurs us on.

There is something that prompts the Magi to lay down their clams, and hit the road.

Every person born--past, present, and future,

possesses a longing---

a longing for the deep recesses of our origins---

a longing for God.

The satisfaction of our longing for God is expressed in faith.

Regarding faith, remember that the Catholic Church proposes the revealing of God in the world

for our belief. . . .generation after generation.

The revelation of God is obviously bigger than ourselves, but this *something bigger* gives us hope---

hope that there is something greater than this wonderful world.

Faith is an assent to what the Church has received from God,

and proposes for our belief.

It is both a *grace* of God,

and an *obligation* flowing from the first commandment:

When we consider a divine commandment, we must realize that it is

a "norm of moral and/or religious action.

And the first norm we are commanded to follow:

"I am the Lord your God:

you shall not have strange gods before me."

In faith do we gather here

to affirm what the Church proposes to us.

In faith do we hear of God's physical epiphany in the world through Jesus Christ.

In faith do we trust the testimony of witnesses, who have made a bold claim,

never before or after made

in the history of the world---

that the man who was manifested before them,

and lived among them,

was truly of God---both human and divine.

In faith do we understand

that this man of God died,

but lived after death.

In faith do we believe that this victory over death

reverses the sin of Adam,

and reopens the gates of heaven.

In faith do we honor today

the small child, born of Mary,

who is revealed to the world,

who is named Jesus Christ---Emmanuel---

meaning "The Anointed of God

Who Saves Us and is With Us."

In faith, do we respond

to the presentation of God in the world

by giving ourselves as a gift.