

Fr. Brad Neely
Epiphany of the Lord
Sppp: Nezperce: Jan 02, 2011
Is 60:1-6; Eph 3: 2-3a. 5-6; Mt 2: 1-12

With our Sunday celebration today,
we contemplate the "epiphany" or "manifestation"
of our Savior in the world.
This somewhat short Christmas season
takes us from the *incarnation*
of God in the flesh---the *birth* of Jesus,
to his appearance, revealing,
presentation---his **manifestation** to the world.
He is *Emmanuel*---"God with us."

This is a continuation of focus
upon Christ—*Emmanuel—God with us*
throughout our entire liturgical year.
We constantly pray in the midst of the Scriptures,
which relate to us how Christ
manifested---revealed---and presented **Who God is.**
With Jesus, God becomes flesh,
and we are made in the image and likeness of God.
We will never **be** Jesus, obviously---
to know what it was like to be manifested---
revealed fully human and fully divine.
But Jesus does ask us
to "follow Him," and "live in Him."

We do well to take seriously how we are doing
as we manifest ourselves in the world
as one *following* and *living in* Christ.
We may not think about it a lot,
but we obviously **do** manifest ourselves
to the world
in our everyday words and actions.
So---if we are baptized---
or---immersed into the life of Christ's life---
and have assented to "follow Him"---
then **how are we doing**
at manifesting or revealing this truth
to the world around us?

What does manifesting ourselves
as one who lives *in* Christ really look like?
Is it walking around with our hands folded,
praying all day?
---possibly, but not probably.
Is it selling all we have,
leaving ourselves with one set of clothes
and one pair of shoes?
---possibly, but not probably.
Is it constantly telling all who will listen,

the Good News about the kingdom of God.
Possibly---but probably not constantly.

Praying, living very simply,
and continually sharing the Good News
can be ways that the world around us
understands who we profess to be.
But we certainly also want to keep in mind
how we are called upon and challenged
to meet everyday situations
as they present themselves.
For ones who manifest the life of Christ,
our reactions to all sorts of situations
need include **honesty, justice, and charity.**
Do our knee-jerk, automatic reactions to things
during our day reflect honesty, justice, and charity?
These three words are easy to say,
but more difficult to actualize.
However---if we are made
in the image and likeness of God,
and if we live in Christ,
and are to reveal Him in the world,
we must remember that we are also
His ears, eyes, lips, hands, and feet.
Where God enfleshed in Christ
has returned to heaven,
we are still moving about
in the flesh and *in person*.
And if we reveal ourselves well
as ones who live in Christ---
we receive a **gift**.

When the Magi brought gifts to Christ,
they were specifically related
to His true identity.
They knew exactly who the gifts were for:
**incense to the God* before them,
**myrrh to the man* before them,
*and *gold to the king* before them.
God....man.....and king.

When **God** brings *us* a gift,
for living in the life of His Son,
it is related to our true identity---
that being--as children of God---
our true identity lies in aspiring
to the fulfillment of God's will for us---
salvation.
Our gift of is that of the **restoration**
of what was originally meant to be---
---that all those created
in the image and likeness of God
would live forever with God in the kingdom.

Christ is manifested and presented
to the whole world---
all people, all places, through all time.
The One who is manifested in the flesh,
in a manger,
in Bethlehem---
is not God **isolated from** us,
but God *with us*,
and *presented* to us.

This One born in Bethlehem
extends an invitation to us
to received the gift of sharing
in eternal divine life.
So then---how does the world understand
that we are in the process
of accepting that invitation?
How are we,
who rejoice at the manifestation of God made flesh,
manifesting ourselves?