

Epiphany of the Lord – (1/6/08)

The feast of Epiphany celebrates the revelation of the new King's birth to the whole world, not just to the Jewish people. We are the world to whom the message of the new-born king is announced. Having heard the message many times before in our lifetimes, we may be a little blasé about the announcement. That would be a shame, for the message is just as important for us this year as it was 2000 years ago. Jesus is born again in time for each of us at Christmas time when we humbly accept the gift of His presence for us. As we celebrate Epiphany, we become the magi who find the presence of the Lord and then take that knowledge with us into our daily life. We share the good news with those we meet; Our Lord has indeed come to save all of us. Let us rejoice in the Lord always!

May the Lord bless us in this New Year with the richness of His presence, and may others come to know the love of God through us. Amen!

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord – (1/13/08)

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord may seem a little out of place to end the Christmas season, since it takes place some 30 years later than the birth. But it is the transition of Jesus from his ordinary worker life to the proclaimer of the coming of God's redemption for His people. Not only proclaimer, but three years after his ministry begins Jesus actually fulfills our redemption through His loving sacrifice on the cross. Jesus begins His ministry with the same words of all the prophets before Him, "repent." He then adds, "and believe in the Good News." The "good news" is that God has come to bring about the redemption of His people (all humanity). Sin and death no longer our ultimate destiny, but rather eternal life is now possible through our acceptance of God's grace in Jesus.

The Baptism of the Lord also shows the transfer of authority from John the Baptist to Jesus, as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the dove, rests on Him and God says, "This is my Son." Though some of John's followers found it very difficult to accept this transfer, John himself proclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Jesus begins His work of salvation, first by teaching for three years. The teaching was necessary to show the deeper understanding of God's commitment to us through allowing His Son to sacrifice Himself to become the source of salvific grace for all humanity. The Jews of Jesus' time and even many people today have difficulty understanding such a God of Love. Do we have difficulty understanding God's love for us? We need only meditate on the crucifix to begin our understanding. However, we will never fully understand it until we come face-to-face with Jesus.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time - (1/20/08)

We have begun the season we call “ Ordinary Time.” It begins with readings very much like those of last week, “The Baptism of the Lord,” because it is related to our baptismal calling also. And we are still in a transition of authority from John the Baptist to Jesus. When Jesus came to John, a great many people knew who John the Baptist was, but very few would have recognized Jesus. John himself has to testify to his followers that Jesus is “the Lamb of God.” Now Jesus begins his ministry, continuing the same proclamation of John, “Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand.” Jesus becomes the sacrificial Lamb who is offered up to take away our sins, and to restore all creation to God’s peace and harmony.

When we say in the mass the words, “This is Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,” what are we thinking? Do we acknowledge the real presence with us in the Eucharist of the God who sacrifices Himself for us?

If we recognize Him, we are able to receive Him into our hearts and lives. Then we shine with the inner light of Christ and become the servant of God, the Light to the nations. May our behavior always lead others to Christ! Amen!