

Feast of the Epiphany (1/4/09)

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the message of God's love that encompasses the whole world, not just the one nation of Israel. Jesus comes to offer salvation to all peoples of all times and places. We, as members of the Church, are called to be welcoming ambassadors of the Lord's love with the world. What does that mean for me?

Each of us comes into contact with many people of many different backgrounds almost every day. How do we treat our neighbor? Do we harbor prejudices against those who are "different" than me? Do we find some people acceptable and some unacceptable? Jesus himself, from the moment of his birth as a baby, was unacceptable to the ruling authorities, who tried to kill him and instead killed dozens of "Holy Innocents." Do you know other babies who are unacceptable in our world today and are killed instead of welcomed?

On this holy feast let us give thanks for God's universal love, and rededicate ourselves as ambassadors of that love. Happy and Holy New Year to all. Amen!

Baptism of the Lord (1/11/09)

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated this last Sunday of the Christmas season. It is a culmination of the time (some 30 years) between the incarnation of Jesus as a baby and the beginning of his public ministry. Jesus comes to John the Baptist, not because he needs to be forgiven of sins but because he is the one whom John's message refers to. John is witnessing to the coming of "...one mightier than I..." who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John may not have been totally certain his cousin Jesus was the one until the Spirit descended on Jesus coming up out of the water. Then he knew and could continue his testimony, knowing that Jesus must increase and he himself must decrease (in reputation).

The reading from Isaiah and 1st John announce the coming of a Servant who will bring to fulfillment the covenant promises God made through Abraham. God will be the source of justice and nourishment for all who believe and trust in Jesus as the Son of God. Through Jesus God's mercy and justice will begin to make itself known in the world until the Day of the Lord (when he returns in glory). Then all of God's glory, which we understand only dimly now as we live the life of grace, will be revealed in its fullness. Amen!

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (1/18/09)

Do we hear the Lord when He calls? Or do we think that the Lord hasn't called ME, maybe someone else, but not ME! If we are expecting a "burning bush" or booming voice from the sky when the Lord calls, then we probably haven't been called. But what if God calls us in the ordinary events of our life? That is the way God normally communicates with us. First, in the beauty of creation God calls to us, telling us something about Himself and about ourselves if we are "listening." Then God reveals Himself in His Word of Scripture, teaching us how to behave in relationship with God and others. Most particularly, God reveals Himself in the person of Jesus, true God and true man. And finally, Jesus reveals Himself for us down through the ages in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

Do we hear His voice at mass? It's impossible when we carry all our worries and concerns with us into the liturgy. Instead, we are invited to gently set our burdens and preoccupations aside in our mind and open our hearts to hear the Lord. The Lord will teach us about His Love for us and inspire us in response to lead a life of love and care for others that will be a witness to Christ in the world. God inspires us to inspire others, especially our children. May God bless us with open hearts all our lives! Amen.