

EPIPHANY- YEAR A – OLPH - 2014

(Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12)

In today's gospel, we heard about the gifts brought to Jesus by the Wise Men, the Magi. I'd like to give each of you a **small gift** – a gift of realizing the **presence of God**...right here...right now. The gift I'm going to give you is a few seconds of silence, about ten seconds of stillness and all you have to do during those ten seconds is realize that God is present. We are so busy in our lives that we rarely take the time to be quiet and realize God is there. Amazingly, even when we come to church we still don't take a lot of time for stillness and in that stillness feel the presence of God. **So here's your gift** Maybe you should be kind to yourself and reward yourself with such a gift every day and you could call it *'resting in the Lord'*.

Some times while reading the newspaper, listening to the news on the radio, or watching current events on television, we may wonder where is God in this world of ours. In the long daily litany of pain, sorrow, suffering, dishonesty, death, greed...**where is God?**

Today we celebrate **Epiphany**. Epiphany means **revelation**, showing, or making known. The enduring insight from the earliest days of Israel to our own modern Christianity is that God is not remote from us; God is actively involved...God cares...God is concerned. So where is God?

God is present in the **epiphanies of our daily lives**. Perhaps we think of these epiphanies only in one way – the good and nice events of our day. Like standing on a beach and watching a perfect sunset and saying to oneself “yes, there is God”. Receiving a gift of forgiveness from a friend or spouse and saying to oneself “yes, there is God”.

However, as believers we know that God comes to us, the essence of God is revealed, in the mystery of the manger and the mystery of the cross. The depth of God's Being is made visible in the vulnerability of a child and in the perfect weakness of a man on a cross. We find God in the sacrament of everyday life. We encounter God in trials, sufferings, joys, triumphs, hopes, fears, defeats and successes that come to us each day.

...when our best efforts at work go unappreciated – God is present. ...when we get an A in a difficult assignment at school – God is present. ...when a child is born – God is present.

...when a parent or spouse dies – God is present.

On those mornings when we wake up, sit on the edge of the bed, rub our eyes, think of the problems we face, worry whether our life has any real meaning, and wonder if there even is a God – **God is present**.

The epiphanies of life are not just about us. God is present in the way we serve our neighbor. God is forever the beggar outside our gate, the victim left on the side of the road and the voice of those who have no one to plead for their needs. We are not just called to be sensitive to God's presence within our own lives but we are also called to extend God's presence through our care for others. Each of us is called to be a *living epiphany and a sacrament of God's love* to the world around us. ...when we reach into our pocket and give to the poor – God is present. ...when we hug our child – God is present. ...when we work to correct an injustice – God is present. ...when we pray with a friend in the hospital – God is present.

As I thought about the **epiphanies in my own life**, I recall one in particular. I was struggling with my **vocation discernment** before entering St. Augustine's seminary. Sleepless nights were the order of the day. After all, the decision I had to make was momentous! No matter where I turned, I felt alone, I felt left out, I felt abandoned, not only by God, also by those nearest and dearest to me. No one could help with the decision. I had to make it myself. After much prayer and reflection, I came to the conclusion that I had to leave it up to God rather than impose my will. And once I accepted that God's will was the deciding factor, peace of mind enveloped me and I have never looked back since. I realized that in the process of discernment *God was there* and led me by the hand without imposing his will. He brought me to accept his will for me and be *content with it. I realized I was not alone – God was there.*

Jesus is called *Emmanuel – God with us*. All too often we forget this wonderful revelation. Sometimes all we have to do is take the time to open our eyes and see...open our ears and hear...open our hearts and feel the presence. May we all see and hear and feel the epiphanies of God in our lives this day and each day to come. Above all may we never be afraid of listening to the silence and stillness in which God usually manifests his presence. May they be the stars that lead us to Christ and to God.