

Epiphany - B
Isaiah 60:1-6;
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6;
Matthew 2:1-12
Little Flower - 1/7/18

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany. On Christmas, we celebrated the historical birth of Jesus and his manifestation to the Jewish people represented by the shepherds. Today we celebrate the meaning of his birth and his manifestation to the Gentiles represented by the Magi.

The story of the magi, as recounted in today's Gospel, is one of the most familiar stories in the Gospel. The magi were led by a mysterious star to the Christ child to whom they presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. As Pope Francis said on the Epiphany last year, "having found the Child, 'they fell down and worshiped him' (v. 11). They did not just look at him, they did not just say a circumstantial prayer and leave, no indeed, they worshiped: they entered into a personal communion of love with Jesus."¹

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul refers to the mystery that was made known to him by revelation. This great mystery, this great revelation, was that "*the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*" In other words, all people without exception are called to be sons and daughters of God in Christ and, therefore, brothers and sisters of one another in Christ. Revelation is a key theme in Catholic theology. We have to remember that God's revelation is intensely personal. Jesus Himself is the fulness of God's revelation, and we are called to have a dynamic personal relationship with him.

In the Old Testament, Isaiah prophesies that Christ will be the light of the world, and this light will draw all people to himself. As God's sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of one another, we are called to enter into a personal communion of knowledge and love with Jesus but are also called to be his lights to the world.

My brothers and sisters, this month we will become the first parish in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to participate in the ChristLife program. ChristLife can be life changing. ChristLife aims to create missionary disciples by helping people discover Jesus Christ personally, follow Him in their daily lives as Catholic disciples, and share Him with others. Once a person discovers Jesus, begins to follow Him, and learns to share Him, he or she wants to invite more people on a life-changing adventure with Jesus Christ!

Beginning on Monday, January 29, Little Flower Parish will host "Discovering Christ," the first component of the ChristLife program. Discovering Christ is a seven-week experience that invites every person, baptized or unbaptized, to encounter the love of God the Father, enter into or renew a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as God's children.

The program will meet on seven Mondays and include a retreat on Saturday, March 10. The weekly sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. Each weekly session includes four components: a free meal, prayer time, a video teaching, and small group discussion.

Over the years I have heard former Catholics say that the one thing they did not find in the Catholic Church was a personal relationship with Jesus. Also, many practicing Catholics admit that their faith development largely stopped when they left school or CCD. Many Catholics also say that they are not comfortable sharing their faith with others or they do not think that the Catholic Church does enough to share Christ with others. ChristLife is a contemporary response to these concerns. Discovering Christ is designed to deepen our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Today there is a program flier in the bulletin. Someone will be in the gathering area to answer any questions you might have. Finally, there are sign-up sheets at each of the doors of the church. I want to encourage you to sign up today. Please feel free to invite Catholic and non-Catholic friends. However, it is important that you register as soon as possible because registration is limited, and our cohort parishes—Holy Spirit, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St. Philip—are also invited. Discovering Christ has the potential to be life changing!

¹Pope Francis, Angelus: Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, Saint Peter's Square, Friday, 6 January 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2017/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20170106.html.