

Epiphany - C
Isaiah 60:1-6;
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6;
Matthew 2:1-12
Little Flower - 1/6/19

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany. This year the Solemnity falls on the traditional date of the Epiphany, January 6, the twelfth day of Christmas. On Christmas, we celebrated the historical birth of Jesus and his manifestation to the Jewish people represented by the shepherds. Today we celebrate the deepest meaning of the Incarnation and birth of the Son of God and his manifestation to the Gentiles represented by the Magi.

In his homily for the Epiphany last year, Pope Francis focused on three movements in the journey of the Magi to see Jesus. As the Magi recounted, they “*saw his star at its rising.*” To see the star, they had to look up. In other words, they had to look beyond themselves and even beyond the limits of this world. Pope Francis asked, “Do we know how to dream, to long for God, to expect the newness he brings, or do we let ourselves be swept along by life....?”

Having seen the star, the magi then had to set out on the journey. According to Scripture, Abraham is our father in faith. Abraham set out on a journey for an unknown land and an unknown future with only God’s promise to guide him. He entrusted his life and his future to God and to God’s word of promise. Like Abraham, the magi set out on a journey for an unknown land with only the star to guide them. Faith for us is a lifelong journey. If we continue on the journey, we will come to Jesus and find fullness of life.

Finally, the magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Jesus is God’s greatest gift to us, the gift who makes all love possible. Our gift to God should be the gift of ourselves with all our strengths and weaknesses, our talents and our limitations, in service to God and others.

All three readings speak to the meaning of Jesus’ incarnation and birth. Jesus came to reconcile us with God and with one another. As St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... slave nor free, male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” [3:28; RSV 1973]. The shepherds were Jews; the magi were Gentiles. In today’s second reading, Paul wrote that “*that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*” Although Isaiah prophesies the coming of the magi, he also prophesies the coming of all peoples to the Lord.

My brothers and sisters, last year we became the first parish in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to participate in the ChristLife program. 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. Last year approximately 90 people participated in the “Discovering Christ” component of the program.

Beginning next Monday, January 14, Little Flower Parish will once again host “Discovering Christ,” the first component of the ChristLife program. Discovering Christ is a seven-week experience that invites every person 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, February 16. The weekly sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. Each weekly session includes four components: a free, home-cooked meal, prayer time, a video teaching, and small group discussion.

Bernie Sponsel will be in the gathering area after Mass 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, and please feel free to invite Catholic and non-Catholic friends.