

January 3, 2021



Dear Parishioners,

Friday, we celebrated the Feast of Mary, Mother of God. How appropriate that we celebrate her on New Year's Day. Who brings more newness into our lives, as least for us as Christians, than God-with-us, Emmanuel, who needed Mary's "Yes" to come into our world and our lives?

This Sunday we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, the coming of Magi from the East - wise men, kings, astrologers - we don't know exactly who they were or their status. But we do know that they weren't Jewish, probably considered pagans, that they came from far away, thus their depiction often as those we might consider African, Asian or of mixed race. In case we might miss the point of this feast, each of the readings in its own way indicates that this Child is good news for everyone. Isaiah proclaims, "Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come and the glory of the Lord shines upon you. Nations shall walk by your light and kings by your shining radiance. Psalm 72.1 declares, "Lord, every nation on earth will adore you." Paul's letter to the Ephesians 3.6 affirms that, "The Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." And in Matthew 2.11, the three follow the star "prostrate themselves and do him homage."

Some of us who are older will recall the distinct impression we were given that we Catholics were the only ones who might make it into heaven. How did we read these passages and not come away with the sense that Jesus came for everyone, not just Catholics and/or the Jewish community in which he grew up and to whom he preached? And if we do believe that his coming as a human being was for everyone, to what attitudes or actions might that call us? If we read the gospels or listen attentively as we hear them proclaimed via livestream, do we not notice that Jesus is always reaching out, often to the most unlikely people? Are we open to the possibility of sharing our faith or our time with someone who might be open to a word of encouragement, especially these days? The Holy Father in his homily for January 1 asks Mary to intercede for us since she "brought God into the world of time, [to] help us to be generous with our time." (This homily and all of Pope Francis' homilies are accessible at ZENIT.org, the Vatican website.)

After Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with the flocks, then the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all people, to make a little music with the heart...

-Howard Thurman

Peace to you and all our global family! Sr. Sheral