

The Greek word Epiphany means appearance or manifestation. It is a revelation of his divinity. First, the angels revealed Jesus to the shepherds. The feast of Epiphany celebrates Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi, who show us that Christ is the Savior of all of humankind.

This story teaches us that God will reveal Himself to anyone who seeks Him.

The Magi came looking for a king. Where do you look for a king? In a palace. Who else is likely to be there? A royal family. But the Magi came to a cave or a stable where they found a poor family, with animals and perhaps a few shepherds.

All the appearances would have told them they had made a ridiculous mistake, yet "falling to their knees, they did him homage." God can be found in the most surprising places if we will look and open our hearts.

What began your journey to Jesus? What was that moment, that person, that event, that song you heard, that story you heard, that tragedy that occurred that turned you Christ-ward?

I speculate that people who meet Christ generally fall into two categories: those whom Christ just surprises one day, and those who start a journey that may take years to finish. Yes, some people get surprised—ambushed—by Jesus. One-day Jesus just shows up and says hello.

The shepherds in the field were like that. They were just minding their business, trying to get through the night. Perhaps they were having a little chit chat: "Hey, how's the wife?" "Good, good. How about you?"

They weren't expecting anything. And then the sky lit up and a song of angels broke forth. BOOM and everything changed. Now, it is usually not that obvious! But I suspect for some here, that it was a big moment – something that changed the direction of your lives.

Then we have the wise men eagerly searching for Christ and probably traveled hundreds of miles to do so. They had this inkling, this hunch that there was some truth out there worth the longest, most difficult journey—worth bringing their best gifts for. They had something in their hearts that said, There's something out there. Let's go looking.

+I think of those folks who have made the journey through RCIA – something touched them; perhaps the light of another's faith. It's always beautiful and emotional on that Easter vigil.

The question is, "Will they continue the journey from there? Will they be that light that may lead another to where they have been?"

The religious leaders had five miles to travel between Jerusalem and Bethlehem and can't be bothered. There is a lesson for us regulars not to take for granted just what we have here: the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ both in the Sacrament and in those who surround us.

It is a message for those who believe other matters take precedent. Or, if we are honest, you're just a bit lazy when it comes down to it. We have parishioners here 80 years plus who always seem to find a way to being here.

It really is astonishing to me, bitter cold, snow what have you and they find a way. The message of their presence asks, "What can be more important than what is taking place this day in this place?" (Okay, maybe this might be permissible with a Redskin play off...)

Astronomers tell us that for a period of time around the birth of Christ, there was in fact a star which shone brightly in the Eastern sky. That star was there for everyone to see. The Jews could have seen it. The Pharisees and Sadducees could have seen it.

Herod could have seen it. Anyone who looked into the sky could see this magnificent star shining brightly, yet only the Magi followed the star in order to find Jesus. Same is true today – this Cathedral shines for all to see with her doors left open and bids them to come. (Except for next week!)

Conclusion/recap:

1. The Magi shows us that God reveals himself to those who seek him. "When you search for me, you find me; if you seek me with all your heart", promises Jeremiah (29:13)

2. And sometimes God surprises us in the most obvious of ways that one would have no excuse for not being here. +I remember when I was discerning the priesthood and was going to talk to my pastor about it, but got cold feet during the Mass. Then came his homily: "Those who feel called to the priesthood should step fwd."

3. The Magi show us that God speaks to those who will listen. +Soren Kierkegaard said it best: "When you read God's word, you must constantly be saying to yourself": It is talking to me, and about me.

We all have our part to play and that is to listen.

4. And finally, it was not an easy journey for the Magi, perhaps at times they found themselves lost or separated from one another for part of that journey.

Maybe some of you are a little lost in your journey? Not sure where to go? Feeling separated?

+E. Stanley Jones tells of a missionary who got lost in an African jungle—nothing around him but bush and a few cleared places. He found a native hut and asked the native if he could lead him out. The native said he could.

"All right," said the missionary, "show me the way." The native said, "Follow me." They walked and hacked their way through unmarked jungle for more than an hour. The missionary got worried. "Are you quite sure this is the way? Where is the path?" The native said, "In this place there is no path. I am the path."

There are times in our lives when we find ourselves in situations which offer no clear-cut answers. It is at these times we can trust ourselves completely to God, as the Magi teach us, to keep looking, stay on the path for we will find him, for he is the way, the truth and the life.