

Homily  
January 7, 2024  
The Epiphany of the Lord  
23:58 – 32:25

Show off! Show up with flair! Panache! Elan! Showdown! Show-stopper!

Each of these “showy” idioms describes an intensity of a moment, a moment outshining other moments. These moments are arrow-like. They point to something perceived or displayed as important. Indeed, as more or most important.

***Show forth*** is another such idiom. And it is the idiom of this day: **Epiphania** – Greek, “***to show forth.***”

What we remember today, my brothers and sisters, is what the Church has variously and traditionally recalled on this day. Three events in the life of Christ;

The Star, yes, leading the Magi to the infant Jesus.

But also, Jesus willing to be baptized by John in the River Jordan  
to bring us Salvation.

And finally, water being changed into wine by Jesus for the  
Wedding Feast at Cana.

The Gospel passage we heard today tells us of the Magi. Tomorrow’s Gospel, on the day when the Baptism of the Lord will be celebrated, will tell us of the Baptism. Normally it would be on a Sunday, but we have a shortened Christmas Season this year. And the Wedding, which in Year C is recalled the following Sunday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, instead this year is the Gospel found in Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours.

What we celebrate are not events, but rather their shared theological meaning: the manifestation of the Divinity of Christ and the universality of his role as Messiah. We witness this meaning in starry light, the wedding feast of Eucharist, in the baptismal water of the Jordan. But more

so when we gather here for our memorial meal of Eucharist, the symbols and actions we employ **show forth** the meaning in a somewhat dramatic, showy fashion, don't they – especially on a day like today and throughout this season.

Look at all of them! (gesturing to the decorations) It's a bit dramatic, showy, but there's good reason! To lay before us how important the meaning and the mystery is behind what we celebrate.

**Epiphania** - to **show forth**. That is what God has done in Christ. Epiphania -- to **show forth** what is more, or most important, what is central to earthly life and eternal life.

You do know that we are the descendants of the Magi. We are gentiles. We are a people, though, whose lives are washed in the Baptism of Salvation. And we are a people whose thirst for life is slaked through the Cup of Salvation. As such, we are living, breathing icons of the very feast we celebrate today. We can be, in a very real sense, "**Epiphany**," God's **showing forth** through our lives.

But our **showing forth** is neither a passive voice, nor statuesque poses painted upon us in glitter, gaud or flashy hues. Rather, our personal and faith rooted. "Epiphany" is found in the flash of action and the wealth of our values. These declare what is more, or most important, what is to be **shown forth**.

What are your **Epiphanies**? In what manner do you **show forth** the mystery of God - God in our midst? How do we do that together? What is more, or most important? The clothes with which we are draped, or the love with which we drape another? The flag of country, banner of fraternal or service organizations, or sports banner, or the Cross of Christ, humbly hung in our home where all can see?

What is more, or most important: The time we spend entertained by electronic diversions, novels, sporting events, evenings out? All good in themselves! But is not the hour spent in personal prayer and Eucharistic Memorial Meal the most important? And the need to win and be right, or the need to discern together what is best and how to bring it about? And finally, the competitive success of

business and career, or the compassion for the poor, the homeless, the refugee, given out of our wealth, our goods, our time, our attention, our heart.

These examples I give you and give myself are not “either – or,” but rather, they need to be compared to what the Lord has brought to us in his Life, Death and Resurrection and his Manifestation into our world.

Our God has revealed, as St. Paul spoke in our Second Reading, “his excellent plan of salvation for all people.” Our God has called, as we heard Isaiah proclaim, that this people of salvation - Jerusalem, are to rise up in splendor.

**Show forth!** Be light to the glory of God, shown upon them, that the nations might walk by that same light.

And so, let us **show forth**. Let us be **Epiphany** for all of humankind to see.

Why? That all might believe that Christ is **God Among Us**, Messiah for everyone. So that together we can proclaim the praises of God.