

The Vigil and Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord/  
Year A – 7/8 January 2017 – Volunteer Recognition  
Weekend/Volunteer Appreciation Brunch following  
9 and 11 AM Masses/Blessing of Chalk for House  
Blessings for Epiphany –  
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –  
HOMILY

**1st Reading:**

Isaiah 60:1-6

- "Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance."

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalm 72 - *Sung*

**2nd Reading:**

Ephesians 3:2-3a; 5-6

- "You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. *It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed* to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

**GOSPEL:**

**MATTHEW 2:1-12**

- *role of Herod - use of the astrologers* - "They prostrated themselves and did him homage. . . . And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another way."

**I.** Father Ron Rolheiser spoke about a retreat he had taken several years ago. The Retreat Director began with those gathering by telling them, “I’m only going to try to do one thing with you [during this time]. I’m going to try to teach you how to pray so that sometime . . . [if not this week or perhaps not even this year . . . but sometime] in prayer, you will open yourself up in such a way that you can hear God say to you . . . I love you! . . . because unless that happens you will always be dissatisfied and searching for something to give you a completeness you don’t feel. Nothing will ever be quite right. But . . . but once you hear God say those words, you won’t need to do that restless search anymore.”

Isn’t this at the center of every person’s desire and longing . . . to not just hear someone speak . . . from deep within . . . the words, “I love you.” . . . but also experience and feel that love . . . We want that in this life . . . we want that as human persons from other human persons . . . but we also desire and long for that from God . . . now . . . and for all eternity.

**II.** So, perhaps that star these astrologers followed was more than just some mysterious light in the sky . . . perhaps it was the clearest signal they could have been given . . . that all they desired . . . all they longed for had finally been made manifest . . .

Admittedly, at least according to the Gospel we have heard proclaimed, it does not seem as if any dialogue was exchanged between these magi and Mary, let alone the child she held . . . nor anyone, for that matter, that may have been part of this profound encounter . . . this “epiphany” . . . So yes, that which the magi . . . along with other human persons . . . desired . . . longed for . . . albeit, to hear someone speak words of love for them . . . experience someone’s great love for them . . . were not spoken to them nor necessarily experienced by them upon entering the house . . . yet, they **knew** . . . they **knew** they were in the presence of love incarnate . . . a love different from anything they had ever experienced . . . a **divine** love made manifest in a little child . . . they **recognized** this and ultimately . . . they **responded** to it . . . not just by prostrating themselves and doing this child homage . . . nor even by presenting the child with such precious gifts . . . but by changing course and taking the such great news with them by means of a different route . . .

The Epiphany of the Lord was never intended to merely be something to just treasure . . . to simply store in our mind’s photo album and every now and then look back on to reminisce . . . no, the Epiphany of the Lord was a proclamation to the least likely from the least among us that God is **real** . . . that God has set in motion a means of

reconciling every human person with God **again** . . . that God does **indeed** love . . . love you, Balthazar . . . love you, Caspar . . . . love you, Melchior . . .

As Father Rolheiser recounted, there was now nothing more to search for . . . nothing more to be dissatisfied with or restless about, because now . . . **now**, these three individuals knew they had been given all they needed to be complete . . . and they did not simply hold on to this . . . but took it with them . . . back home . . . by another route so they could communicate this wonderful news to others.

**III.** You and I are called to do the same . . . we are called to **recognize** the Lord . . . in the Word He speaks to us . . . in the body and blood he feeds and refreshes us with . . . **recognize** the Lord, present in this sacred encounter, reminding us that He **loves** us deeply . . . each of us . . . dwells among us . . . and such recognition must also lead us to take this news with us . . . no matter the route we follow . . . take this news with us and bring this news to others.

As we recognize so many who have given of their time and talent over this past year . . . we recognize that this is what they have done . . . through their words . . . but also through their deeds . . . they have communicated the great

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news of God's love for us and for others . . . and through their service, worked to make this manifest . . .

May each of us become the response to God's great epiphany in Christ Jesus . . . becoming an epiphany . . . a manifestation of this love in all we say and do . . . and bringing that love to others . . .