

January 8, 2017
Feast of the Epiphany ’

**Upon us the Lord shines, and over us appears his glory. We are radiant at what we see,
and our hearts shall throb and overflow.**

Pope Francis says, “Sometimes I hear confessions where people say, I complained to the Lord. No, complain! God is a father and this is a form of prayer. Complain to the Lord, this is good.”

Background to the Feast of the Epiphany

To gain a better appreciation the Epiphany, here is some background information.

- (†) **Meaning:** the word, Epiphany, comes from the Greek word “phainein” which means “to show, to manifest.” It is also the root word of fantasy.
- (†) **Scripture:** scriptures are filled with epiphanies of God: old Sarah pregnant, the burning bush, the plagues in Egypt, crossing the Reed Sea, the column of smoke and pillar of fire, the sun standing still at the battle of Jericho, pregnant Mary, the angel appearing to Joseph, star at Bethlehem, the angel appearing to Mary, the angels appearing to the shepherds, the star and on. The scriptures are one long epiphany - appearing - of God.
- (†) **History:** The earliest reference to Epiphany as a Christian feast was in A.D. 361, by [Ammianus Marcellinus](#). In the Latin-speaking West, this feast emphasizes that the revelation of Jesus is also for non-Jewish people.
- (†) **Date:** Epiphany is celebrated 12 days after Christmas on 6th of January.
- (†) **Practice:**
 - in Spain, you might go to the local bakers and buy a special ring-shaped roll filled with cream or chocolate and is decorated with a paper crown
 - in Italy, some children get their presents on Epiphany
 - in Belgium, children dress up as three wise men and go from door to door singing songs, and people give them money or treats, kind of like our Halloween.
 - in Poland, children also go out and sing.
 - in [Austria](#), people write over their front door the initials of the names traditionally given to the three wise men: **C**aspar, **M**elchior and **B**althazar, along with the year. So 2017 would be: “20*C*M*B*17”. The sign is meant to protect the house for the coming year.
 - in Ireland, women traditionally get the day off and men do the housework and cooking.

God is still manifesting God's self sometimes in the ways we least suspect

I read an article [this past week](#) entitled, "*Even complaining to God is a form of prayer*" by Pope Francis. It can be found in the [National Catholic Reporter, December 28, 2016](#) In it, Pope Francis says, "*Sometimes I hear confessions where people say, I complained to the Lord. No, complain! He is a father and this is a form of prayer. Complain to the Lord, this is good.*"

"To complain to God in moments of doubt and fear like Abraham did is not something bad, but rather is a form of prayer that requires the courage to hope beyond all hope. While in life there may be times of frustration and darkness, "hope is still there and it moves us forward." This is what we learn from our father Abraham who complained to God that he did not yet have a son. Complaining to God is a form of prayer. 'Complain to the Lord,' Francis says. 'This is good.'"

Complaining to God is a prayer of Hope. It means we are taking God seriously, that God is manifesting God's Self to us which draws us out of our isolation. It is good to feel free to complain to God about what is bothering us because complaining to God is actually a prayer of Hope.

Let's practice complaining to God

This is not meant to be a playful exercise but one that confronts seriously what is upsetting us at the moment. Ask yourself the following question: "*What is it that I am unhappy about that leads me to want to complain to God?*"

... 15 seconds ...

We just prayed for Hope for 15 seconds! What a beautiful way to celebrate Epiphany!

So, Happy Feast of Epiphany Everyone!