

The Epiphany 2018

"Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. Raise your eyes and look about. You shall be radiant at what you see, and your hearts shall throb and overflow." (Is. 60:1ff)

Background to this Feast

History: The story of the Magi has been around since the fourth century.

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 Red 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.

Epiphanies, Manifestations - Reflections of God are still happening today

This is a contemporary story of an Epiphany. It is in the January 3, 2018 edition of the National Catholic Reporter by Maria Benevento. It is titled, "*Catholic Worker house allowed to stay open in Wheeling,*" West Virginia. The following is an excerpt from that story.

"The Gospel sometimes calls us to be out of step with the rest of society," said Catholic Worker Kate Marshall. Faced with complaints from her neighbors that threatened her ability to operate [House of Hagar Catholic Worker](#) in Wheeling, West Virginia, she began a conversation about tolerance and inclusion. *'We opted to use this as an opportunity to open up a conversation and dialogue about who we are, how we live out our faith, what Catholic Workers are, and ultimately what as Christians that we're called to do in our faith, in our treatment of other people.'*

"Kate Marshall started House of Hagar in 2012, running it out of the home she shares with her children, both biological and adopted, and with other workers who join the community for a few months or years. *'When people come to House of Hagar,'* she said, *"they know that not only are they wanted, they feel they are a needed and valued part of our community and we can't be that without them.'*

"It was in 2016 that Marshall's ability to continue this work was jeopardized when some of her neighbors complained to the city about House of Hagar. The city Planning Commission responded by asking Marshall to apply for a permit.

"Despite believing she would have a strong case in federal court, she chose to cooperate with the permit process and *"enter into conversation and dialogue as an example of how problems can be addressed and maybe worked through outside of a judicial system. If we'd won in court, we would still be in conflict with the community, or the city that we dearly love."*

"The city recommended she obtain a permit to operate. Marshall was able to disprove many of the complaints by showing the house had never been in trouble with the police or health department, and using her own security cameras to demonstrate they kept reasonable hours. While some of her neighbors spoke against House of Hagar, others spoke in its favor, as did members of local religious groups. On Nov. 13, 2017, the planning commission reversed its decision and voted that a permit would not be required.

"It's a real test for Wheeling," said Marshall. *"I really do feel if people be inclusive-minded, there's room for all of us. But if there's a part of society that is going to be pushed out or not be included, it usually tends to be the poor. A lot of those complaints, while they might have felt very real to the person making them, were unfounded, but that doesn't mean that we can disregard the fact that there are people who feel this way. We need to discuss prejudice. We need to discuss the criminalization of homelessness. We need to find a way to come together as common humanity'."*

God was manifesting Self through Kate Marshall and the Catholic Worker. An epiphany was happening right there in Wheeling, West Virginia.

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God manifests Self thru us whenever we, like Kate Marshall

'Are inclusive-minded, showing others there is room for all of us, that no part of society should be pushed out and not included. God is manifested through us whenever we discuss prejudice. God is manifested through us whenever we discuss the criminalization of homelessness. God is manifested through us whenever we find a way to come together as common humanity. God is manifested through us whenever we open up conversations and dialogue about who we are, about how we live out our faith, and ultimately what we as Christians are called to do in our treatment of other people.'

When we don't do this - in our politics, in our economics, and in our social relationships - God is not being manifested through us. But when we do, an Epiphany of God is happening through us. The Epiphany is our feast. Let us take it and run with it as if our lives depended on it.

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Happy Feast of the Epiphany - Everyone!

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