

January 3, 2016

Feast of the Epiphany

**Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines on you.**

“For no reason I start skipping like a child. And for no reason I turn into a leaf that is carried so high I kiss the Sun's mouth and dissolve. I run to kiss my beautiful Friend and I dissolve in the Truth that I Am.” (Hafiz)

Background

The word, *epiphany*, meaning “appearance” or “manifestation,” is from the Greek, the language spoken for the first two centuries after the time of Jesus. The Epiphany story is that of the three wise men who by tradition came from the East to bring gifts to the child. *Gold* was a gift fit for a king; *Frankincense* was an incense burned in the temple in Jerusalem, and *Myrrh* was a spice used to prepare the body for burial, this signifying that Jesus will bring us closer to God through his death. The story of the wise men is the story of all people - now.

Epiphanies In The Bible

Epiphanies are manifestations of God. They somehow involve a new way of seeing God. There are a lot of epiphanies in the bible: God telling Abraham he will inherit a new land; Sarah giving birth to Isaac in her old age; the hand of the angel preventing Abraham from killing his son, Isaac; Moses and the burning bush; the ten plagues in Egypt; Joshua “stopping the sun “ at the battle of Jericho; the angel appearing to Mary and Joseph about the birth of Jesus; the virgin conception; angels appearing to the shepherds; Jesus’ miracles, and on and on.

Epiphanies are still happening today

At first, it would seem that epiphanies only happened in the past, but they are still happening today: everywhere - to everybody - to you - and even to me. They involve a new way of seeing God, a new way of encountering and celebrating God. Here are three accounts of such Epiphanies.



Hafiz

(i.e. “one who has memorized whole Koran”; most probably 14th c. in Iran)

“For no reason I start skipping like a child. And for no reason I turn into a leaf that is carried so high I kiss the Sun's mouth and dissolve. I run to kiss my beautiful Friend and I dissolve in the Truth that I Am.”



Richard Rohr, OFM

(Center of Action and Contemplation, N. M., from his meditation,
“Love, the journey to the center”)

“Both God's truest identity and our own true Self are Love. So why isn't it obvious? How do we find what is supposedly already here? How do we awaken our deepest and most profound selves? By praying and meditating? By more silence, solitude, and sacraments? Yes to all of the above, but the most important way is to *live and fully accept our present reality*. This solution sounds so simple and innocuous that most of us fabricate all kinds of religious trappings to avoid taking up our own inglorious, mundane, and ever-present cross of the present moment.

“As James Finley says, *‘The greatest teacher of God's presence in our life is our life.’* For some reason, it is easier to attend church services than to reverence *the real--the presence of God,*’ as some of our saints have called it. This doesn't demand a lot of dogmatic wrangling or managerial support, just vigilance, desire, and willingness to begin again and again. Living and accepting our reality will not feel very spiritual. It will feel like we are on the periphery rather than dealing with the essence. The edges of our lives--where we suffer and enjoy--lead us back to the center and the essence, which is Love.

“We do not find our own center; it finds us. Our own mind will not be able to figure it out. We collapse back into the Truth only when we are spiritually naked and free--which is probably not very often. *We do not think ourselves into new ways of living. We live ourselves into new ways of thinking.* In other words, our journeys around our realities, or ‘circumferences,’ lead us to *the core reality* where we meet both our truest self and our truest God. We do not really know what it means to be human unless we know God. And we do not really know God except through our own broken and rejoicing humanity.

“In Jesus, God is telling us that God is not different from humanity. It seems that we Christians have been worshiping Jesus' journey instead of *doing* his journey. Worshiping feels very religious; doing just feels human and ordinary. We are not human beings on a journey toward Spirit, we are already spiritual beings on a journey toward becoming fully human, which for some reason seems hard precisely because it is so ordinary.”



Sr. Ilia Delio OSF

(St. Francis University in Pennsylvania, in the religion and science dialogue)

“The human person is created to see every aspect of life charged with divine energy, and to love what is seen. Scripture is written daily in the supermarkets, nursing homes, cafes, playgrounds, post offices, bars, and home and community life. Culture, art, music, poetry, science, literature, film, gyms, parks—all speak the word of God, who is at the tip of every pen, space, brush, needle, and of every heart and thought. “Life Itself” is the Epiphany of God.”

COMMUNITY SHARING:

“What did you hear in listening to the above?”

**Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines on you.**

In the words of Hafiz: *“For no reason we start skipping like a child.
And for no reason we turn into a leaf that is carried so high we kiss the Sun's
mouth and dissolve. We run to kiss our beautiful Friend
and we each dissolve in the Truth that - I Am.”*

Life is the Epiphany God. We are the Epiphany of God.
This is your Feast Day!

Happy Epiphany Feast Day Everyone!