

Feast of the Epiphany

December 30, 2018

Epiphany means manifestation or appearance and this Feast celebrates three Manifestations. The first is to the Gentiles coming to the manger to present their gifts, which is the focus of the Feast of the Epiphany itself. The second manifestation is to the Jews with the baptism of our Lord in the Jordan by John the Baptist, which is celebrated on the former octave of the Epiphany. The third manifestation is to the disciples with His first miracle at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, which is celebrated on the Second Sunday after the Epiphany. These three manifestations are brought out in the Magnificat Antiphon of Vespers for the Feast of the Epiphany: “We keep this day holy in honor of three miracles: this day a star led the Wise Men to the manger; this day water was turned into wine at the marriage feast; this day Christ chose to be baptized by John in the Jordan for our Salvation, Alleluia.”

The Feast makes it clear that all are called, because the manifestation is to all groups of people. Our Lord came to save all, not just a chosen nation. But to share in this salvation, we must all be part His new Chosen People, the members of His Mystical Body, the Church. St Peter says: “He has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). It is being united to our Lord through charity and the light of Faith (first received at baptism) that we become members of the Church and we, in turn, must bring this Faith to others. The Faith needs to be communicated to others by the faithful living out their faith with humility and charity, thus calling people out of the darkness into the light. When charity lacks in our approach to others, we drive them away from the Church and even cause an impediment from their returning anytime soon. We commit a serious sin, if we do so intentionally, and we bear responsibility for the souls estranged from the Church by our lack of charity.

Why do I mention this during this festive season? Because we continue to have issues with a few people who take it upon themselves to secretly correct others on the way they dress or behave. Though there is a time and a place for fraternal correction, the way it is being done here is uncharitable, completely out of place and destructive of the parish. If someone approaches you or your children about the way you or your loved ones dress or you hear of someone doing this, please let me know so I can deal with these vigilantes.

Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP

Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish