

EPIPHANY 2015
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER JOHN ALTBERG
MATTHEW 2.1



THIS DAY...*EPIPHANY* derives from the Greek word *epiphanos*, it means, “to show forth”...in English “to manifest” the sub title in the Book of Common Prayer. The current issue of The Parish Times has a significant prelude to this evening...

Our own manifestation of The NATIVITY has been a preeminent feature for the past 12 days and is right here in front of us...the nativity crèche...it is, in itself an epiphany, for it ‘shows us’ in three-dimensional physical detail what happened. It is one of the most effective teaching tools imaginable.

The crèche is central to our Christmas Eve Children’s Mass...children showing and telling the Nativity story as they place each figure in the scene. For the children it is their personal epiphany. For the adult participants it is a special epiphany as it becomes apparent how much children really know!

Epiphany calls us to consider what has been shown to us during Christmas just past. Yes the tree has been taken down, the decorations stored; the secular New Year commenced...new demands have likely succeeded the Christmas frenzy. We must now ask ourselves, what did we see, what did we learn...what was SHOWN to us...? What special gifts did we give and receive that will cause us to forever recall the reason for Christmas...?

The most startling statement which came to me this Christmas was CHRISTMAS IS REALLY JUST FOR CHILDREN...IT’S ABOUT SANTA

CLAUS...THE JESUS STUFF IS UTTER NONSENSE...ADULTS SHOULD NOT BE BOTHERED WITH SUCH FANTASY...that sadly means the infectious and reassuring enthusiasm of childhood has been lost or suppressed. Hearing such a statement means there exists an opportunity for a ‘personal epiphany’...to show what happened at Christmas and why it’s always important...for everyone.

One thing IS certain; Christmas is about children...equally about adults...

Tonight we celebrate the arrival of three new adults on the scene...symbolically they have move from their distant location into the Crèche just as the Gospel recounts...more about them as Epiphany unfolds...

Take another, closer look at the crèche today. What will you do now with what you know about what you have seen? Epiphany opportunities are endless...the story IS for everyone...WHAT WILL YOU SHOW...WHO WILL YOU TELL...?

