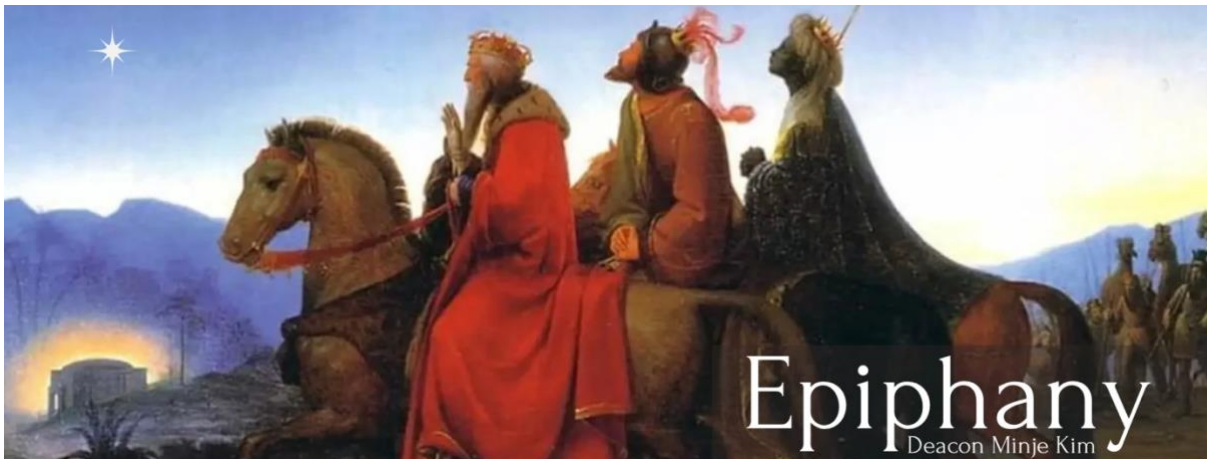


EPIPHANY

The Epiphany of the Lord – 8 January 2023



'The Journey of the Three Kings' by Leopold Kupelwieser | public domain | edited www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com

I cannot obviously forget my diaconal ordination last year on 18 Nov. The ordination left a significant mark on my life as I embarked on the cleric journey. There were many memorable moments of the ordination, one of which was "Calling the candidates". After the Gospel, I was called by name to step forward to the sanctuary. I responded, saying, "present". My response (saying 'Present') made two focal points. First, I was publicly present to get ordained from and among the people of God. Secondly, I revealed myself as who I was. During the ordination, the congregation was aware of a couple of crucial points that I had: My presence in the Church and my identity as a missionary servant of God. The ordination was absolutely special to me. Still, at the same time, it was special to the participants in the ordination because it is through the Sacrament of the Holy Orders that we all confirm our discipleship for God's mission.

Today, we have just listened to the Gospel, where Jesus was in a similar circumstance to my ordination. We know well that the Solemnity of Epiphany is to commemorate Jesus, who publicly appeared to the world as Saviour. Making an appearance to others is simply showing oneself. Yet, it is not limited to showing oneself to others. It is more like creating a space to interact with others. In the space of interaction, we show our presence and identity to others. Being present implies the accounts of existence and revealing one's identity. Let us think about Jesus' manger. Jesus was present in the manger to show that he was called by his Father as the Son. Jesus shows where he came from. Jesus presents that he opens himself to all as Messiah and tells us that he is always present with humans.

At the same time, today's gospel reports the visitors who worship Jesus. After following the star, the three wise men reached Bethlehem to find baby Jesus. The three wise men are significant characters in the gospel. What the three people did first was moving to the Lord from their residences. They adventurously made their way to Bethlehem, where Jesus was present. The Magi revealed their existence before the Son of God and their identity in their connection to the Son of God. Their identity became clearer while they were worshipping Jesus, and placing their gifts. Epiphany is the celebration of Christ's manifestation to the magi encounters vice versa, that is to say, Jesus' manifestation to human beings coincidentally happens with human beings' presence with Christ. Following Christmas, Epiphany affirms again God's boundless love towards the human race by sending His Son.

Friends of Christ, we are also examples of God's self-manifestation to humans. Before considering ourselves as believers of Christ, we are seekers of Christ. As the wise men moved to Bethlehem, we moved from our home and reached our church, another manger, to seek our Lord. As we seek Christ, we are subsequently blessed to sense baby Jesus' appearance towards us. We are led by the Spirit to fully sense Jesus' presence in taking his body and blood. Jesus' presence meets with our presence.

We celebrate Epiphany not only for God to show His Son to the human race but for us to present ourselves before God as confirming our identity as followers of his. Our journey of faith is the totality of moments that we stand before God. In celebrating Epiphany, let us walk forward towards where Jesus is. Epiphany happens everywhere as Christ transcends space. Our home, workplace, and wherever we will stand are the manger of Christ, where Christ makes himself visible, and we worship him.

May He continue to guide us all through the path of grace and His love and truth so that we may follow Him with all of our hearts and minds and be truly saved.

Deacon Minje

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010823.cfm>