

## **Feast of Epiphany – Cycle B (January 8, 2012)**

I have three pairs of glasses –my vanity of vanities– and each one has a different "look." But one thing remains the same: the prescription is the same for each frame. I may look different, but I see the same way wearing each frame. The Feast of Epiphany asks us to see with different lenses, to "see" with a much wider "frame" of reference.

In the first reading, the prophet tells of the chosen ones who are returning from exile seeing things in a very different light, "Raise your eyes and look about, they all gather and come to you..." This was an expanded vision, for the people were called to see God's plan as embracing *all of humanity*.

The astrologers from the East, the Wise Men, were following a star and in the journey, their vision was expanding wider and wider. Once they saw the star and followed it, they let go of the way they saw the world and the Power that brought it into existence; they were now seeing things through much wider lenses.

Epiphany is God manifesting himself in our lives. God breaks into our ordinary lives allowing us have an "epiphany," an experience in which we see God and life in a much different way; when god manifests his presence, the effect is to broaden our field of vision. The purpose of these epiphanies is to experience the magnificent divinity of Christ, shining through his humanity, an experience that begs us to give glory to God and change the way we see.

Every epiphany means changing routes, changing courses, so that the journey moves us in a new direction, allowing us and empowering us to let God become the driving force. And this divine energy frequently leads us on a journey into uncharted territory of the human heart... an inner journey that gradually frees us from past wounds and hurts.

"Changing routes" has been in the news the past few weeks, in ways that have made so many of us, particularly in the Gay and Lesbian community, very uncomfortable. The route of the annual Gay Pride parade was changed in such a way that would have made going to Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel on that Sunday morning difficult, if not impossible, for parishioners. After much discussion and some controversy, a compromise was worked out between the leaders of the parish and the organizers of the parade. The route was changed.

But in a television interview, the Cardinal was asked to express his view on the matter and he responded by comparing the intentions of the leaders of the "Gay liberation movement" to those of the KKK. By such a divisive comparison, the Cardinal was not seeing the wider picture, and his lack of clarity caused anger and hurt to many. In an apology he said, "When I was talking I was speaking out of fear the I have for the church's liberty and I was reaching out for an analogy which was very inappropriate for which I am sorry...sometimes fear is a bad motivation." These are the words of the Cardinal. Fear always limits our vision; fear always wants us to take the easiest route, the "road most traveled;" fear forces us to live life in a dualistic manner, creating an us-versus-them reality; fear makes dialogue and discussion impossible.

I believe the Cardinal had an "epiphany," a moment that has compelled him to see life and people through a wider lens. He gives us all a lesson, for we are all prone to the same reality: living out of fear. The exiled people, the Wise Men, journeyed free from fear to see the world and its people as belonging to God: All belongs to God. What is important is not the frame you are wearing, but the lenses...maybe it's time for a new prescription, not new frames.