

## **The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord: The Journey into Light**

The boy started with pot, and then graduated to being a living pharmaceutical factory. In high school he was cool. Way cool. He was popular. At least, among the other druggies. He ploughed his way through high school, and then some college. His life was one train wreck after another, destroying and being destroyed. Then, one day, Grace overcame him and called him to a journey, a road trip if you will. He walked in darkness, not sure of where he would end up, but he felt a great deal of fulfillment just in the fact that he was finally traveling away from his past, and traveling to his future. He knew he had ruined much of his life, but he also knew that he had a great deal of his life left. And there was the goal. The goal was to find the Lord. It was not an easy search.

At times it seemed that he went to all the wrong places, even getting the wrong directions. He even, if you would allow the illusion, he even went to the court of the so called leader of the religious people, Herod by name, a pious Jew by acclaim, a worst sinner than the boy. There are a lot of sinners out there. But even sinners live surrounded by truth. The boy, now a young man, still found the right road. And through the counseling, the drug rehab programs, the N.A. meetings, he was led to Bethlehem. He sought the healing strength of the Savior. He gave himself as a present to the true King of the Jews.

And then he returned home. He knew that there were places of darkness there that he used to embrace. But instead of running back to the darkness, he walked to the light, and the wisdom, and the radiance of Jesus. And others saw the Christ in him. They looked back at the journey and realized that it was hard, but it was wonderful.

A young man and a young woman were overpowered by the forces of lust. In the name of love, they lost their ability to love. There was the porn, and the casual sex, and the objectification of others and of each other that led to a meaningless marriage. All through their lives they told others that they were enlightened, modern, fulfilled. They weren't. They were needy, primitive, and in darkness.

But then Grace drew them away. It was Christmas, or Easter, or whatever, and they began to question their lives. They had no meaning, no purpose. They missed Jesus. So, they went on a road trip. It was not an easy journey. The darkness kept overpowering them. But they kept their eye on the goal. At times they stumbled. They were often convinced that they fell more than they stood. But they kept their minds set on the journey. They leapt into the Presence of the Lord. They found Him. Or He found them. Then they returned. They were dead to their past. Yes, the temptations of the human condition assaulted them. Yes, they had moments of missing sin, moments of longing for the days of darkness, but their joy at the birth, the new life of Christ within them, was not momentary. It was eternal. They willingly embraced a death that would give them such a wonderful life. They lived under the Mercy of God. And others saw the Christ in them.

We are all on the journey, the ultimate road trip. We are all called away from the hollow life, the life of a dead world. We are all called away from darkness. The journey is not easy. Others mock us, call us names, tell us that we are hypocrites. They tempt us with the very objects of desire that we used to embrace. "Come to the party, there will be great stuff there. Be sure to have someone watch your kids for the next day, you probably won't be returning home till who knows when. Hey, what's with you? Why do you say now that what you did before was bad when you know you loved doing it? Come back to our lives, to your old life."

What so many consider good, is evil. And this evil is all there for our taking. But if we go back, and re-embrace the evil, we lose the light. To return to the darkness, we would have to sacrifice the journey. We would have to give up seeking the goal, seeking Jesus Christ.

We have to fight them off, all these temptations that are drowning us, sucking His Life out of us. We have to fight them off. We can, because the goal of the journey is so wonderful, so delightful, that nothing, can ever replace it. Nothing can ever replace Him.

And so we are overwhelmed by Joy, the Joy of the Lord.

One tradition calls the magi kings. Another refers to them as wise men. When we join them on the journey of life, we are both. We are wise because we see the reality of Life with Jesus, and we are kings because we reign with Him in the Kingdom of God. And His Life becomes our lives. And His purpose becomes our purpose. He came for no less than the transformation of the world. We live for no reason other than to join Him in the Quest. We live for Jesus Christ. We live for the Kingdom.

They call this feast the Epiphany, the showing of the Lord. And it is true. When we walk away from the darkness, when we walk to the light and embrace Jesus Christ, the Lord is shown to us in every aspect of life. And we show His Presence to others.

Are the temptations too great? Is the night too dark? No. No power is greater than His. No darkness can smother His Light. We can be epiphanies, manifestations of His presence to others.