Epiphany Season 2011
Thursday, January 6th - Tuesday, March 8th

The Epiphany season sometimes gets lost amidst recovering from the frantic pace of Christmas holiday celebrations and discerning New Year’s resolutions. In the Church our attention has been focused on waiting for God during Advent and God’s incarnation through the birth of Jesus at Christmas. The word epiphany means “to make known” to “reveal,” and in the season which begins January 6th and continues until Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, we celebrate the manifestation of God through Jesus to all the peoples of the earth.

In Matthew’s gospel, we read the story of the wise men seeing a star in the east and traveling to Bethlehem to visit the new born king. These men were astrologers who watched the stars for signs of heavenly activity. In observing the rising star, they were moved to travel to Bethlehem to pay homage. The wise men recognized the divine in their lives and responded by presenting themselves and their gifts in reverence.

Over the next eight weeks of Epiphany, you are invited to reflect on the ways God’s love is evident in the world today and to grow in your response. Throughout the season, resources will be shared which offer ways to develop the practice of noticing God in your life through art, music, literature, nature, and within human relationships.

Getting started

The practice of looking for God in the world will take time and commitment. To begin, decide how often you will spend time in reflection and prayer and for how long. The frequency of your practice may be fifteen minutes once each day or an hour once a week. It is best to choose something that feels appropriate for you.

Will you journal?

What works best with your daily demands? You may want to keep a journal, with pen and paper, digitally, or by gathering images and objects that represent for you God’s manifestation in the world.

Inviting others

Consider asking a friend or group to be involved in this activity with you. Growing in relationship with God is strengthened through conversation with others. Consider inviting a friend to join you in this Epiphany practice or form a small group. It is in sharing the stories of our faith that we grow in recognizing God at work in our lives and in the lives of others.
Epiphany Practice I

Opening Reflection

“MINDFUL”
FROM WHY I WAKE EARLY
by Mary Oliver

Every day
I see or hear
something
that more or less

kills me
with delight,
that leaves me

in the haystack
of light.
It was what I was born for -
to look, to listen,

to lose myself
inside this soft world -
to instruct myself
over and over

in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,

the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant -
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,

the daily presentations.
Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
how can you help

but grow wise
with such teachings
as these -
the untrimmable light

of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?

This week, reflect on the following questions as you intentionally watch for the ways God is in the world. Who is God for you? What has helped you come to this understanding? Scripture? Prayer? Where do you feel closest to God? Where or when have you had an experience of God in the world? How did you respond? Is there a book, song, or movie which helped reveal God to you? In what way?

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