

**EPIPHANY OF
THE LORD
YR B 2018
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JANUARY**

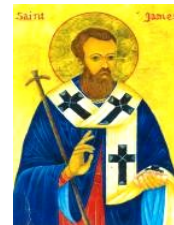
The Parish of St James



Coorparoo

An Augustinian Parish

Archdiocese of Brisbane.



Moderator's Musings

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – A REFLECTION

Last Monday, we celebrated the Feast of Mary Mother of God. I was very struck by the image of the 'Face of God' in the first reading from the Book of Numbers where we have the special blessing, 'May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.'

There is something very personal about our face – acknowledging that not all of us like the face we have been given. Indeed, some of us work at improving it with make-up, jewellery, a moustache or beard, even some metal pieces here and there or a tattoo! We also work on the surrounds – our hair colour and style, or even no hair at all!

We come to know others through how they communicate as persons – not just their words but their facial expression, tone of voice, body language and so on. God too seeks to show himself to us in the fullness of his being and he does this in the most excellent way through the Birth and Life of Jesus – in a very real sense, the *Face of God*.

Already we have encountered the *God-with-us* in our celebrations of Christmas, the Holy Family, and indirectly Mary the Mother of God. But with God there is always more – we never exhaust the immensity of God. This Feast of the Epiphany broadens the scope of God's coming into the world and breaks open for the world who this child really is, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah - *Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. Jesus' gifts are for the whole world!

Our Advent prayer mantra - *Come Lord Jesus!* – remains our focus in this Christmas Season as we reflect on the wise men being guided through darkness by the light of the star which leads them to Jesus and the manifestation of God to Gentiles, heralding the reality that Jesus comes for all people as he reveals his very self in human flesh.

As Christians we remain convinced that only Jesus can satisfy the deep longing in our hearts expressed beautifully in St Augustine's words, 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you!'

In his homily on the Epiphany last year, Pope Francis picked up on this inner hunger, describing the three Kings as those who, 'personify all those who believe, those who long for God, who yearn for their home, their heavenly homeland,' and reflect, 'the image of all those who in their lives have not let their hearts become anesthetized.' Like these kings, the Pope explains, 'a holy longing for God helps us keep alert in the face of every attempt to reduce and impoverish our life. That longing keeps hope alive in the community of believers, which from week to week continues to pray: **Come, Lord Jesus!**'

The Magi responded to the star and followed it, seeking to know more, and they found that in Bethlehem. To quote the Holy Father again, they found, 'a promise of newness. There something new was taking place. The Magi were able to worship, because they had the courage to set out. And as they fell to their knees before the small, poor and vulnerable Infant, the unexpected and unknown Child of Bethlehem, they discovered the glory of God.'

As we recall that blessing – 'May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.' – we are reminded of the exciting reality that is God's definitive gift to us in his Son Jesus and our Saviour's merciful gaze that heals, forgives, and comforts those who suffer.

What might this mean in our lives? Perhaps like the Magi, we need to reflect more deeply on the meaning of our personal experiences, perhaps to follow a new path, perhaps to find more loving ways of relating to our families and others in our lives, of supporting those on the margins in our society.

In our world today, it is very easy to be swept along by popular fads and movements, superficial values, and the trap of busyness that can blind us to the needs of our neighbor and dull the experience of our God who wants to be loved. Each of us has been given much by the Lord and so, in the spirit of Pope Francis' reflection, we must never let our hearts become anesthetized!

Fr Dave Austin OSA