

This is the Sunday we celebrate the “Epiphany.” The Greek word for Epiphany means to “manifest,” or to “show.” On Epiphany Sunday, we celebrate the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ to the world.

Today’s Gospel lesson from Matthew 2 is about the story of the Wise men or the Magi.

But who were they? The bible doesn’t tell us the details about them—I mean, it does not even say how many they were; we just assume they were three people because they gave three gifts to the baby Jesus; but we do not know.

One thing know of them is this-- they were not Jews; the text says they were from the east or eastern lands.

And they asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews?” That means they did not know that there was a prophecy concerning the location of the Messiah’s birth. If they were some sort of Jewish teachers, they would have known it because it was already written in the scripture.

So scholars agree that these Magi were Gentiles; they were not Jews; they were from some eastern country like Arabia. Some say they were astrologers since they were guided by the star.

What is the point here? What is the message Matthew is trying to convey here?

Of course, Matthew is telling us that they have come all this way to pay a visit to the new born king, the Messiah, the Son of God, the world has been waiting for.

We also know that they did not come with empty hands; they brought gifts-- three gifts-- , myrr, frankincense--- meaning Jesus was the ,

The message of Epiphany Sunday is not about the mystery of the magi but about the divine revelation that was shown through Jesus.

A South African minister John van de Laar says in his blog:

Defensiveness and otherness are two of the main characteristics of today's political, social, economic and relational world. In the quest for self-development, human beings have increasingly seen their individual selves as distinct from and “other than” other people.

Businesses work hard to “distinguish” themselves from their competitors and even nations work hard to identify themselves, drawing boundaries, naming enemies and allies, and putting huge investments into defending what is “uniquely theirs.”

That’s what people do; that’s what companies do; that’s what makes us stand out in this world; and that’s what lets you succeed.

You have to be different; you have to make yourself unique; you are in competition; you have to be defensive; and you have to win in the competition. Otherwise, you will be called a loser.

But, this blogger says, “Epiphany reveals that Christ crosses all of these boundaries, refusing to be defensive or self-protective, and refusing to draw lines separation.”

This incarnate Messiah draws all creation together into one, and gives up his own safety, security and comfort in order to do it.”

<http://sacredise.blogspot.com/2009/12/rc1-year-c-epiphany.html>, accessed 12/31/2009

What a powerful statement!

Jesus did not come to compete; Jesus came to bring us together.

Christ is the one that brings us all together.

Jesus came as light and this light does not discriminate us; rich or poor, men or women, high or low.

God does what He wills; and his will is to love all.

We cannot own God; God owns us; we cannot claim that God’s love is only limited to certain people; we cannot say that God’s salvation is given through a certain rituals or doctrines;

“Light That Shines Through Us,” Isa. 60:1-6; Matt. 2:1-12; Epiphany Sunday; 1/3/2009; Albany UMC

So all we can do is come close to His presence; all we can do is come and kneel down before Him; all we need is to accept his invitation to love and mercy.

So as children of God, this morning, we come and be surprised by his mercy and generosity.

Christ comes to us as light; one thing about light is that we need to open ourselves first; otherwise the light will never come into us.

May this light shine upon all of us so that we may become small lights in the world.

Amen.