

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH

EPIPHANY 2nd JANUARY 2011

The Feast of the Epiphany. Epiphany means literally a showing.

Babies are born very privately just as Jesus was, but once they are old enough mothers take their babies out and show them off. How many times have we had to walk around baby buggies surrounded by admiring friends as the mothers take their babies into town for the first time?

It's their epiphany.

Jesus' epiphany was more complicated. It took place in three stages.

The first stage was the visit of the magi or kings or wise men.

They are symbolic, representing the whole world. By receiving them and accepting their gifts Jesus received and accepted the whole world. He was no longer just for the Jewish people but for everyone.

This is actually a more effective way of showing Jesus off to the world. If Mary had simply taken Jesus into the streets of Bethlehem and shown him to the people she met, she would have shown him only to the Jewish people.

By allowing the symbolic visitors to present their gifts to Jesus she created the image which St. Matthew has recorded in his gospel, enabling us to believe that Jesus was born for all.

The second stage of Jesus' epiphany was very different.

It was his emergence from private life into public life as an adult at his baptism. We will celebrate that next week.

The third stage of his epiphany was his working of his first miracle, changing water into wine at the wedding at Cana.

This is not history. We are thinking about the same Jesus who lives with us still.

He needs his Epiphany now in 2011.

If someone said to us as Christians: "Show us Jesus" how would we respond?

Where would we look for Jesus? The wise men found him in the house, not the stable according to Matthew. So where is the Jesus' house now?

This church is certainly his house. He lives here in the Blessed Sacrament. We meet him here in Holy Communion, but this is not the only house in which he may be found.

The wise men did not find Jesus in the synagogue; they found him in an ordinary house. So it is today. Jesus can be found in our own homes if we are ready to let him be seen.

Jesus is seen in all the loving relationships and acts of love that we show in our homes. He is seen in our generosity, our compassion, our patience, our forgiveness, our kindness.

Homes can be holy places. They do not have to be perfect. They can be chaotic but still holy.

They can accommodate the unexpected; Mary and Joseph were not expecting the wise men.

Church and home are not alternatives. There is an essential link between them.

The Church is like the trunk of a tree; our homes are the branches. The Church supports and feeds our holiness at home.

Just we have to go out to a supermarket for physical food so we have to come to church for our spiritual food. If we need a weekly shop we need a weekly Mass.

Let us pray that if anyone asks us to show Jesus to them we may be able to show them our homes as well as our church. The house where Jesus was living was holy to the wise men because they found Jesus there.

May our houses be places of epiphany too.

Rev Geoff Carey