

Wednesday after Epiphany. 1/6/2021

They saw Jesus walking on the sea

We celebrated the solemnity of The Epiphany last Sunday.

In Mexico and some other countries, The Epiphany is celebrated today, January 6th. It is today that children wake up to discover, next to the nativity scene or under the Christmas tree, the gifts brought to them by the magi from the east. As the magi came to adore the Child Jesus long ago, they also like to come and do something special for children today. This is part of the Hispanic tradition of the Christmas season, and a wonderful day that children look forward to. With some help from parents, the three magi king create this experience that is delightful, and completely out of the ordinary.

In the Gospel today we also hear about an Epiphany, as Jesus reveals his divine identity. It is not in this case to the entire world, represented by the magi, that his divinity is revealed, but instead to his disciples. The disciples will be learning gradually, as Jesus teaches them patiently who he is.

We find the disciples today rowing in the boat, in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. They have been rowing very late into the night, and they are far from shore. Not only are they tired of maneuvering the boat, but they are also tossed about, as the wind is against them. The sea can be a dangerous place, where life itself is at risk.

In the Roman measurement of time, the fourth watch of the night was between 3am and 6am. It is at that time that

Jesus comes to them, walking on the water, and they see him. To walk on the water is a sign of the divinity of Christ, a way in which he is revealing himself to the disciples.

Given their situation, seeing Jesus come to them should be a cause for relief. However, they don't recognize him, and they become terrified. What they are seeing is something so foreign to their experience, so far from their understanding of the world, that they cannot really assimilate it.

Jesus calls to them to reassure them, "It is I, do not be afraid". The name of God, "It is I", is another sign of his divinity. And then he gets into the boat, and the wind dies down. It is close to dawn. Jesus is with them. They are safe.

The Gospel closes with the final reaction of the disciples. They are completely astounded. They have no idea what happened. Their hearts are hardened. But they will stay with Jesus, they will continue to follow him. It will take more time and patience for the disciples to understand the Epiphany, to understand what the gifts of the magi symbolize: Jesus, you are true God and true man.

In his love, God will also reveal himself to us in our lives, in different forms. At times they will be unexpected or out of the ordinary. At times they might even appear frightful to us. Let's prepare our hearts to recognize him, and stay with him with patience and confidence, even if it takes time to understand his presence, especially in the difficult experiences of our lives. And let's start by focusing on something that is truly extraordinary: The sacramental

presence of Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass, the mystery of his body and blood in Holy Communion, and his desire to remain in us. United with him, we can help to bring the gift of peace to his children, this January 6th, and every day of the year.

If we love one another, God remains in us

- We can love because God loved us first
- God sent his Son as savior of the world
- God presence transforms the world, its presence is felt through love between people, vertical and horizontal dimensions of love
- Love brought to perfection, no fear of judgment
- Stay in relationship in love (child), not fear (slave)
- Gospel reminds us of God's presence, no fear
- We may not recognize God, but he is present in all circumstances
- He asks us to row, will come with us in the boat

Beloved

God loved us, love one another.

God remaining in us

Love brought to perfection

The Father sent his Son as savior of the world

God is love

Love brought to perfection confidence on day of judgment

No fear in love, perfect love drives out fear (punishment)

One who fears is not yet perfect in love

Sign and expression of the love of God

They saw Jesus walking on the sea

Made disciples get in the boat and precede to other side

Boat far out on the sea

They were tossed about while rowing, wind against them

Fourth watch of the night (3 to 6), went walking on sea

They thought it was a ghost and were terrified

Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid

Got in boat, wind died down

They were astounded, didn't understand, hearts hardened