

Epiphany 2012  
Deacon Pat Hall

[Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3A, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12](#)

*Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/010812.cfm>*

Merry Christmas!

Today we celebrate the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. Tomorrow we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. And then we enter into Ordinary time. We move into the regular order of the days we build one on top of each other and then another that becomes our lives.

The wrapping paper is all cleaned up. The presents have migrated from our living rooms to their ultimate destinations and we are left with the quiet glow of having shared love with family and friends. We are consoled as we again realize in our hearts... that God really does love us.

That inspires us to love in return. We want to be better. We've even made new intentions for the year. Well, we are a week into that new year; how are those resolutions doing?

I heard an interview on radio with the stand-up comic, Louis C.K., star of the FX series *Louis*. He told a story about himself and good intentions.

He said because of his successful career he is constantly flying. He flies first class which means of course he gets seated first. He then gets to see all the rest as they file back to coach.

He always notices the service men and women as they file past. None of them ever fly first class. You could be a full-bird colonel, but you fly coach. Now these are folks flying off to war. In your imagination you'd think some big green plane would come to pick up these brave folks and takes them to the battlefield. Nope, that's not how it happens. They hop on to a United Flight at the local airport and they go off to war.

Now these folks are filing past CK thinking that they are protecting our country. They are stepping up to risk their lives for others while going back to coach. Now CK gets to ride in first class because he is a professional so-and-so (he used bluer words). CK is moved by this and entertains the thought that someday he will give up his first class seat for some service man or woman and take their seat in the back. In fact he has thought so many times and on many flights. What he wanted to make clear though is that he actually never did give up his seat. To add to the absurdity, he remembers with savor thinking how pleased he was with himself for even thinking of such a nice gesture. He was able to enjoy the feeling of doing something

nice for someone... without even actually having to do it. And CK added, with his brutal comic honesty, that he probably never will.

Oh, if I could only tell you how many times I've done the same thing: the phone call I was going to make to a high school teacher I hadn't seen for 40 years just to let them know how important they were in my life, that favor that I could drop out of the blue that I know would make a difference in someone's life. I understand CK's cheating when I start to think of myself as being noble for having such noble thoughts. But like CK, they never happened.

What is so ironic, is that God offers us that sense of nobility. He came to share in our humanity so that we could share in his divinity.

And yet we continue to mimic the original sin of the Garden of Eden, to seize what we want, to do it our way. The history of "our way" is a trail of tears due to us taking,, and attempting mastery over anything that will yield.

We were offered Eden. We are offered Heaven. But we are diverted by what the serpent promised generation after generation: "The moment you eat of it... you will be like gods." (Gen 3:5)

So how can we share in the nobility God offers? The Magi had a clue. As seekers, they found the divine light. They followed God's directions and found the ultimate light radiating from the place where the child was. Overflowing in gratitude and hope they shared their gifts and adoration, to share in the divinity of the one who came to share in their humanity.

What we search for is already offered. When we enter into Christ, we will be blessed and empowered to act out his love for others. I might actually make that call or offer that favor. I'm not saying be perfect, but I am saying to offer yourself to Jesus so that he can ultimately bring you to eternal perfection.

I am so grateful to the Church for providing the playing field where I can practice. We come here today to share ourselves. At this table we become one with our God and each other. And then we are set loose to go out and share with the world.

God came incarnate, to be just like us, so that we could be just like Him.