

All of the shopping, all of the rushing about, all of the merriment and happiness of Christmas and New Year seems to be now over.

Today, the streets are no longer busy, lines at stores are shorter and noise from fireworks are quieted until next year. The search for happiness and fulfillment, however, continues.

There was a PEANUTS cartoon years ago in which Lucy asked Charlie Brown if he has ever known anybody who was truly happy. Before she could finish her sentence, Snoopy came dancing on tiptoe into the frame, his nose high in the air.

He danced and bounced his way across two frames of the cartoon strip. Finally, in the last frame, Lucy finished her sentence, "Have you ever known anybody who was really happy and was still in their right mind?"

Certainly, we know that many people are unhappy. According to the CDC, 123 people commit suicide every day and 1,000 try to take their lives daily in the United States. That is 365,000 people every year are unhappy enough to try to snuff out their existence. Put another way, in a life time, 15 million people in this country will attempt to end their lives.

As long as the search for happiness and well-being is not met, people's attempt at suicide and taking of their lives won't stop rising, particularly among the young. In fact, our need to search for life's meaning and purpose is imperative. It has always been present in all of us but now more than ever.

As St. Augustine wrote many centuries ago in his book *Confessions*, "Our hearts are restless, until they find their rest in you."

Epiphany 2021

Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

Today's feast of the Epiphany, which means "revelation", reminds us just that – our ongoing search for God and His purpose for us in life.

The Three Kings in today's gospel narrative, we've heard their lives were incomplete, unsatisfied despite their wealth, fame and power. They came in search of the only one who could satisfy the deepest aspirations of the human heart. They longed to find the very meaning and purpose of their existence.

After a long and difficult search, they discovered the place where he lay and encountered the one who had come to redeem humankind and fulfill their intense longings.

Knowing him for who he was, the Promised Messiah, the Magi brought him the most appropriate gifts: gold for a king, frankincense for a priest, and myrrh for a victim. They recognized that he was Jesus the Christ, the only one through whom salvation can be found.

Because the Three Kings were open, they were given the gift of faith. Through this gift they searched, they found, and they believed.

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are not born mature and fully grown. Life is a journey of growth and discovery. But this journey doesn't end when we reach sixty-five, or when we retire. Our life journey continues until we no longer walk this earth.

A living spirituality is one that is always alert for new ways of seeing God, others, creation and ourselves. This quality of being a seeker is one that is absolutely necessary if we are to be true believers and followers of Jesus.

Epiphany 2021

Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

That means we are to forgive those we truly don't want to forgive, to have mercy on those we instinctively want to punish;

We are to care for those in need, even though it's a tremendous inconvenience, to carry our crosses when we want to run away from them, and persevere when we are exhausted, loving when the last thing we want to do is love.

This is what it means to live life authentically as people of faith, as disciples of Jesus. There is no other way. To be a Christian means just that -- we go where Jesus goes and we do what Jesus does.

Although it's simple to say, we know that it's difficult to do. In fact we had lost our focus at living as God wanted us to live that God gave us his Son so that we could see what true faithfulness looked like. God shared in our life so that we could share in His.

And one of the ways we do that is by imitation -- by imitating the one who became one of us. That's the miracle of the Incarnation -- not so that we can admire from afar, but so that we can enter into the very life of God.

So, dear friends, as we continue to search for God, remember to live lives as stewards of God's grace that St. Paul tells us in today's Second Reading. if we truly imitate Jesus, who 'came so we may have life, and have it in abundance.' (Jn 10: 10).

As the wise men sought the newborn child, may we seek meaning and newness in our own lives, and allow the Lord to help us bring that preciousness to others.

HAPPY EPIPHANY