

# THE PASTOR'S CORNER

## EPIPHANY

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“It is required of every man,” the Ghost returned, “that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world and witness what it cannot share but might have shared on earth and turned to happiness.”  
(Marley to Scrooge in [A Christmas Carol](#) by Charles Dickens)

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**T**oday's celebration marks three mysteries: the star leads the Magi to the infant Christ in Bethlehem; water is changed into wine for the wedding feast in the first of Jesus' signs; and Christ wills to be baptized by John in the river Jordan to bring us salvation. All speak of the revelation (the revealing) of the truth about Jesus. This truth is not a mere historical fact (though factual, it is!) to be gleaned from an almanac or an encyclopedia, but the very Word of God given to us to be discovered, pondered, and embraced. Jesus *is* God's message to us. God says it all, in Jesus! Not surprising, the revealing of Jesus to the world also happens to be the way God reveals the truth to us about ourselves!

Our parish life, its community is an outcome of this mystery and revelation. Not just an institution of the Catholic Church, our unity in this common sacramental life of the parish's prayer and works is a sign of the presence of Christ in our neighborhood. The Church, and therefore, St. Marianne Cope Parish, is said in a way to be a *sacrament* herself! As such, all her members become here in Cornwall, New Windsor, and Cornwall on Hudson what St. Paul called “the body of Christ,” and are consequently

the way Christ reaches out and continues to reveal his Father's love in this time and place. “Now Christ's body is yourselves,” wrote St. Paul (1 Corinthians 12), “each of you with a part to play in the whole.”

This thought should stir us for it suggests great power is given to us to share with others: the victory of life over death. It suggests great responsibility is handed over to us: to announce the freedom of the Sons and Daughters of God who no longer live in the “the shadow of death”, “this vale of tears”.

At the beginning of the New Year, many people make promises to themselves in the form of resolutions that are often about personal health, family and friends. In the light of Epiphany, and all that it is about, it makes sense to include promises to ourselves for our spiritual health, our relationship with God, and with the Church (and therefore our parish). What does it profit us to gain the world but lose our lives by neglecting our souls? A resolution to be more attentive to prayer, to avail ourselves of the sacraments (Mass and Confession), and simple kindness toward one another will surely extend Christmas joy into the rest of the year and reap spiritual benefits not only for ourselves but for those we love. First things, after all, should be first.