

SAID ED January 7, 2007

Epiphany & Good Bye

Today we celebrate what theologians call the “Universal Salvific Will of God.” This means that today we acknowledge and honor that truth that God desire for all people to be saved from sin and welcomed into the full Reign of God. On Christmas we heard the story of the poor Judean shepherds who received the “tidings of great joy” from the heavenly hosts that a savior had been born – Christ the Lord. Today’s feast celebrates the arrival of the Magi, wise men from the East –non Jewish royal persons who were searching the skies for a sign of God’s renewing presence. Their searching brought them to lay their gifts before the king, led by the star of Bethlehem. God calls all people into the warm embrace of divine love –that’s what we celebrate today.

We come to the close of the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season (tomorrow with the Baptism of the Lord); we too join the shepherds and Magi in laying our gifts before Christ. We do him homage by placing our gifts, not at the feet of the baby of Bethlehem, but at the service of the community of faith which is our parish and our broader community. This is part of the unfolding plan of God, the building up of God’s reign in our midst.

This offering of gifts is particularly important this year as I prepare to depart for sabbatical on Wednesday this week. As I wrote last week, I have every confidence that this fine community of faith will rise to the occasion and reach down deep within itself to place the abundant gifts that are present in our midst at the service of the parish.

I have often likened my role in the community to that of a conductor of a great symphony orchestra. Just as every symphony orchestra has many many competent musicians who make beautiful music on all sorts of instruments, so is our parish community blessed people who possess many gifts of the Holy Spirit. These many gifts are given by the Spirit for the benefit of the community. My gift as the conductor of the symphony is to call forth its many gifts Just as the symphony conductor knows the score of music being played and can lead the orchestra in creating, blending and emphasizing certain parts to produce a beautiful sound, so does the Pastoral Leader call forth the gifts of the parish community. I love doing this and find it a wonderfully fulfilling experience when we make “beautiful music together.”

While I am away of sabbatical, Deacon Ron will take the baton for me. He will assume responsibility for helping us all minister with one another for the benefit of the community. Ron will be the one waving the baton in my absence. Each of us has gifts that we put at the service of the community with collaboration and coordination we can continue to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

I am excited as I get ready to go away this week but I am also happy that

you all will have the opportunity to see how you will get along without me!
I have full confidence in Ron's leadership and the ministry of Fr. William,
Fr. Bill and our wonderful staff. I will miss you all, but I look forward
to returning in June refreshed and renewed!

Peace
