

Religion and Social

Darkness and winter is the time of Epiphany

By JIM RYAN
Feast of Epiphany
Matt. 2:1-12
Jan. 6, 1991
Jim Ryan

AN EPIPHANY STORY

Ray Kinsella is a farmer who had an epiphany, not the Epiphany, but an epiphany. One day he heard a voice: "If you build it, he will come." Then he had a vision of a baseball field. The voice and the vision went together.

Ray knew that if he built the ball field, Shoeless Joe Jackson would come. Shoeless Joe was a great ball player who'd been suspended for throwing the 1919 World Series. Shoeless Joe had been dead since 1951.

The story is no more complicated than people's motivations, and Ray's motivations were no less complicated than most. In some way, Ray's father, who was also dead, was linked for Ray with Shoeless Joe. If he built the field and Shoeless Joe came, Ray would be reconciled with his father. (They had parted on less than good terms.) Ray wasn't

consciously aware of this; he just knew that he had to follow the voice and the vision.

He spent three summers working on the ball field. The grass had to be perfect. Finally it was ready. And then Ray waited. Not surprisingly, this is fiction after all, eventually, did Ray's father. Ray's epiphany was beautiful. He played catch with his dead father on the baseball field. You can read Ray's story in two books by W.P. Kinsella, *Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa* and *Shoeless Joe*. You can even watch a movie about him, *Field of Dreams*.

The beauty of Ray's story is that, like the story of the Magi, the delight of Ray's story was shared by many others. At the end of the movie you can see long lines of cars coming to Ray's ball field expecting a change in their own lives.

The only problem with Ray's story as a model for Epiphany is that it occurs in the summer. Summer is a time of growth and fruition.



Religion and Reality
By JIM RYAN

To be true to Epiphany, the story should occur in the winter, during a time of recession, unemployment and homelessness, when the world is on the brink of war, and world leaders are consumed by their tenacious egos.

Epiphany occurs when hope is at its nadir, when society lapses into mistake and disaster.

Ray's story doesn't occur at the low point of hope. It occurs when people still have options and choices, before the mortgage is defaulted, and loans are foreclosed.

It's a hopeful story. It suggests that in the warm, comforting

light of summer people can yearn for beauty and truth.

Darkness and winter is the time of Epiphany. Both Christmas and Epiphany are celebrated during the winter solstice, when the sun's cycle is at its low point. For the Western Church the winter solstice was reckoned to occur on December 25; for the Eastern Church it was reckoned to occur on January 6.

Epiphany is the older of the two feasts, originating in the East as early as the second century A.D. Epiphany wasn't celebrated in

the West until the fifth century.

In the East, Epiphany is a celebration of the Lord's baptism; in the West, it's a commemoration of the adoration of the Magi.

The story of the Epiphany suggests something more radical than Ray's story.

It occurs at the end of a historical cycle: the old king is corrupt and evil. The people are suffering.

It marks the beginning of a new era: the new king will bring about an era of peace and justice.

Bible Digest

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Galatians 3:13.

Thank you Jesus for dying for us. Have you accepted Jesus into your heart? He loves you. He proved it. He died in your place, too.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way." 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

If you think the world is wicked now, just wait until the people of God are raptured to Heaven. When the Holy Spirit of God is taken from this earth wickedness will have free reign for a time until Jesus comes to make all things new.

"Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased. For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him." Psalm 49:16-17.

You can't take the things of this world with you when you die. Only what's done for the glory of God will last for eternity. Set your heart on the things that really count.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Revelation 20:10.

The Devil's fate is sealed. He knows that his time is short. Don't fall for his lies. If you do your fate will be the same. Trust Jesus today.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:25.

Our walk should match our talk. Let's live for Jesus and His glory.

"Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou guest." Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Life is short. Give your best to God's will and you will be blessed.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Colossians 3:2.

Look to Jesus and look to Heaven. That's where life will all make sense.

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Welcoming the New Year's baby

Julie and Charlie Burgan of Norval are parents of the Halton Hills 1991 New Year's baby, Colton William. They were visited by Debbie Butler, (left) the local Welcome Wagon Hostess, who gave the family a gift basket comprised of free services and gifts from local businesses. Colton weighed in at seven pounds, 13 ounces and was born January 2 at 5:15 a.m. at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. (Photo by Lisa Boonstopple-Pot)

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