

Religion

Epiphany a moment of recognition and response to reality

By JIM RYAN
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Jan. 20, 1991
Gospel of John 1:35-42



Religion and Reality
by Jim Ryan

The Dearest Freshness
We can't get away from John the Baptist. Here he is again, pointing the finger at Jesus.
Last week, we saw Jesus' baptism at the hands of the Baptist; this week he directs two of his own disciples to follow Jesus.
Last week, we celebrated an epiphany at the baptism of Jesus, when the voice of God said, "You are my Son, the Beloved."
This week we have a minor epiphany: John the Baptist says, "Look, there is the Lamb of God."
The intention of the author of the Gospel of John is that each of us will have a moment of epiphany, when we will say, inspired by God, "This is the Lamb of God."

Some Equations
Epiphany is a moment of recognition of and response to reality.

Let us make the equation clear: God equals reality.
For John, the equation must be expanded: Christ equals God equals reality.

Two Singers, A Poet and Reality
Bette Midler sings that God looks on from a distance.

This is true if what you want is a metaphor for perspective, perspective meaning truth.

But it's false if you mean that God is distant.

God is closer than our own breath, even closer than our own pulse, to quote another singer whose collected works have been available for a long time, "150 Psalms."

My favorite poet, G.M. Hopkins, writes: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."

My favorite quatrain reads: "Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

But the best lines are: And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things..."

Hopkins and the writer of the Gospel of John have the same sense of reality: epiphanies are available to all. Even though, as Hopkins writes: generations have trod, have trod, have trod.

A Prayer

As we enter Ordinary Time in the liturgical cycle, treading the scriptural paths that many have trod before us, let us look for new light and new life to flare up.

A Point of Clarification

The liturgical year is made up of fifty-two weeks, thirty-four of which are called Ordinary Time. Along with these thirty-four weeks, there are two extraordinary cycles: Christmas and Easter. Each extraordinary cycle has preparatory time before the central time: Advent and Lent; and wind down time after the central time.

Ordinary Time cushions and frames these two extraordinary times. We're entering into four weeks of Ordinary Time now, before entering Lent and Easter. But don't worry. There's nothing ordinary about ordinary time. We too, like Andrew and Simon, could have our lives turned around.

Bible Digest

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables." 2 Timothy 4:4.

Do you want to hear just what you want to hear or are you seeking the truth? The Bible declares the truth. Read it and believe it.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? and Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, Ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew 17:19-20.

Faith in Jesus will help you to tackle the impossible too. Have faith in God.

"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly." Proverbs 26:11.

Are we learning the lessons from our mistakes? If not, we are not in the best of company. Learn to trust in the Lord and seek His wisdom for your life.

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him,

being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:16.

We are saved by faith in Christ. Our faith will produce good works. Do you have a real faith in Christ?

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Hebrews 13:17.

It is important to obey and respect authority. The Lord promotes order not chaos.

"For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Psalm 96:3.

Your problem is not too big or too hard for God. He can and will take care of you.

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Hebrews 2:18.

Call on the Lord when temptations are at your door. He knows what it's like but He also knows how to help you overcome. He will give you the strength to be an overcomer.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3:5.

We don't work our way to Heaven. We are saved by the grace of God. Have you accepted God's gift of salvation?

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24.

Enjoy today. It's a gift from the Lord. He has a wonderful plan for your life.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

There is power in submitting our lives to Jesus. When Jesus is Lord of our lives there is glorious victory.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12.

The only way to become a child of God is to receive Jesus into your heart as Savior and Lord. Will you trust Him today? This could be the greatest day of your life.

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New church sign

Members of St. Andrew's United Church on Mountainview Road were busy Jan. 5 weekend placing the new church sign. Pictured left to right are Earl Pepper, Greg Howard, Frank Hannah and kneeling Howard Beltz putting the finishing touches on the sign designed and put together by members of the Building Committee with assistance from the Sign Shoppe.

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