

## **Homily For Tuesday of the Weekdays of Christmas - Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass - Jan 4, 2021**

**1 Jn 4:7-10** "God was revealed among us, that he loved us and sent his Son."

**Ps 72:1-8** "Lord, every nation on earth will adore you. Righteousness shall flourish."

**Mk 6:34-44** "He had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd."

### **A True Epiphany**

#### **Introduction**

In better days, there would be an Epiphany liturgy in the schools. I always thought it would be a hard concept to talk about with children because the word is a strange one. It's one of those Greek words that doesn't have an obvious meaning. What I have found with children is that it's not so difficult, first because it is a fun word to say: E-PIPH-ANY. Before we are done, they are saying the word easily and having an idea about what it means.

This week, especially, we also should get used to having the word roll off our lips, or through our minds. This is the week of considering the Epiphanies of our faith and of our lives. We celebrated this major feast on Sunday, but the actual feast day is on the 12th day of Christmas, which is Thursday this week.

So, following the theme of Epiphany this week, we are looking for a manifestation, or a revealing, or an unveiling, of God, by God, in the person of Jesus, like a beautiful bright light shining into the world, into our situations.

Jesus is the God who reveals himself in the Christ child. This week we see how this Epiphany or manifestation or revealing or unveiling continues in the public ministry of Jesus.

#### **First Letter of John**

First we get a passage from this letter of the 'beloved disciple' John. But this isn't just any passage. It is a profound Epiphany, a revealing of God's very nature.

Listen to what he says. For God is love. The beloved disciple who was so close to Jesus reveals that these two things are identical.

God is love. So, this is not like all the silly ways we use the word. John writes this to tell the Church that the first and great epiphany is that what God is and what God does are the same thing. Consider how this is a summary of the foundation of the Christian faith which we just celebrated at Christmas. "In this is love, that he sent his only begotten Son ... See what love the Father has for us to send his Son to be a gift for us and to offer himself for us. Then he goes on to tell us everything we need to know about how to become conformed to his Son, who is the manifestation, the Epiphany of that love.

## **Mark**

The point of the miracles in Mark is that they reveal something about Jesus, so Mark is always emphasizing Jesus as the epiphany of God. In today's passage, that epiphany is seen in Jesus multiplying the loaves and the fish for a large crowd. They see firsthand that something more than a rabbi is there. Something more than a prophet is there. Something more even than Moses is there. Just as God provided manna in the desert wilderness, Jesus is providing the bread in this deserted wilderness place. Jesus is now revealed as the Lord himself, not just of Moses.

It will take awhile even for the disciples to see this epiphany. They were on their way to the other side of the lake to get some quiet time with Jesus. They are quite irritated by the fact that the crowds are there. But what did Jesus see? Not just a crowd when he was already tired from ministering to people. He saw sheep without a shepherd. They were lost.

We know that, in other situations, Jesus is moved by hunger and sorrow and illness, but what seems to move him most is ignorance. They don't see what the God, who is love, wants them to see. They have the longing to be led by a loving shepherd, but they haven't had an epiphany. They don't know.

Jesus began with the intention to pray. That's first. To be in communion with the Father. This desire is transformed by the situation, which brings about

compassion in him for the crowds. But here is the real Epiphany. Here is what the shepherd does. He teaches them many things. He introduces them to the God who is love. So he feeds their minds and hearts. Then to reinforce that God is with them, he feeds their bodies. This is the confirmation that what he taught is true.

### **Call To Action**

One of yesterday's passages says that there will be many who teach a false way to salvation. But Christ tells the truth. The world will be the battleground between truth and falsehood. As powerful as the purveyors of lies are in the world, the one who is within you is stronger. Even if the evil one has dominion in the world, Christ IN US is stronger.

Many people are lost, with nothing to feed their minds. They are prey to everything on the internet. One way of looking at this is that we must pray or be prey. At least they came looking, not like sheep just wandering around. They are wanting to be led, to find a shepherd.

It is now the job of Jesus' disciples to feed those who are like sheep without a shepherd. If what we provide is not to be the spiritual equivalent of junk food, then we must have deepened ourselves with prayer, compassion, learning and teaching, then feeding ourselves and others. We are not only the ones commanded to feed, but we are the ones who are taken, blest, broken, and given to feed.

How many loaves do you have? Five, and two fish. With love, that will be enough. That's the message, isn't it? When it is the manifestation of the love of God, whatever we have, however small, is enough. Whatever we give him, he will make enough for the service of human need. Now that's an Epiphany.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *Bless is he who comes in the name of the Lord, who has given us light.*

**Collect:** *O God, whose only begotten Son has appeared in our very flesh, grant, we pray, that we may be inwardly transformed through him...*

**1 John:** *Beloved, let us love one another, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

**Psalm:** *Lord, every nation on earth will adore you. In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound.*

**Mark:** *Jesus and the disciples got into a boat and went to a deserted place. But many people hurried there before them. Jesus saw a crowd, and he had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And, he began to teach them. When it grew late, his disciples said, "Send them away so that they may go and buy something to eat. But Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat ... How many loaves have you?" They said, "Five and two fish." Then he ordered them to get in all the people to sit down in groups ... Jesus looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people. All ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.*