

Epiphany

By God's Grace may I speak in the name of the God who reveals Godself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God reveals Godself. That is at the heart of Epiphany season. God reveals Godself. There is a lot we could reflect on about how God reveals Godself in today's readings, but as we start into Epiphany I want to start by reflect a bit about to *who* God reveals Godself.

God reveals Godself through Jesus, the little baby born and laid in a manger. That's what we celebrated on Christmas. But to whom is God revealed through this little baby? Firstly, obviously to Mary and Joseph. Then came the shepherds, alerted to the birth of Jesus through angels and now there are the wise men from the east, led to Jesus by a star. God reveals Godself to women and men, to poor and rich, people with little to no education and people with the highest possible level of education, and to people from different cultures and ethnicities. God reveals Godself to all of humanity.

As human beings our brains are wired to group people into 'us' and 'them'. 'Us' are people we perceive to be similar to ourselves and therefore less likely to attack us or be a danger to us in any shape or form. 'Them' are people we perceive to be one way or another different from us, and therefore more likely to attack us or be a danger to us in any shape or form. Our instinct for self-preservation then tells us

to surround us with people similar to ourselves and to keep a safe distance from people, who are different to us, who we don't fully understand, find difficult, unnerving or simply strange.

God on the other hand has no such sense of self preservation. God is utterly other from us human beings, yet God breaks down the wall of separation between God and us, by becoming one of us. And while we are sometimes fearful and nervous about any and all human beings who are different from us, in the sight of God we are all equally precious and beloved by God. God does not have a favourite few people to whom God reveals Godself. God reveals Godself to all of humanity.

This is one of the important messages of the Christmas story. God reveals Godself to all of humanity. That is why angels are sent to the shepherds in the field. These shepherds likely had barely if any education. They had minimal income, just about enough to make a living, as long as nothing happened, like a famine, an illness or an unforeseen hike in rent. Their proximity to sheep meant they were perpetually smelly, making them social outcasts. As far as the majority of people were concerned, these shepherds barely mattered. But they matter to God, who sends a host of angels to make sure they know that Jesus is born. God makes sure to reveal Godself to the shepherds.

And now God guides wise men from the east through the stars to meet baby Jesus. Up until now most or all of the people, who encountered the baby Jesus, were likely Jewish people. But these wise men probably weren't. We do not know exactly where they came from, what people or peoples they belonged to and although we often

speaking of the three kings or wise men or magi, we do not actually know how many there were. Artists often depicted them as being from different peoples and of different ethnicities. One often is shown as Asian, one as African and one as European. Like I said, we do not actually know where exactly and what peoples they came from or how many there were. And while one can make educated guesses, I don't think this is the crucial point here. The crucial point here, is that Jesus, the Son of God, was born Jewish, was raised within the Jewish culture and traditions and lived as a Jewish man. But Jesus, the Son of God, did not simply come to reveal Godself to some people and not to others. God became one of us, to reveal Godself to all of humanity. God guiding the wise men from the east to meet the baby Jesus is another way of God making it abundantly clear that in Jesus Christ God wants to reveal Godself to all of humanity, to all peoples, tribes and nations.

God wants to reveal Godself to all of humanity. God wants to be known by us, each and everyone of us. Such a simple truth, yet one Christians of all times have a tendency to easily forget. Some of us might feel like we do not matter and that God would never bother to reveal Godself to us. Sometimes we might catch ourselves thinking that another person doesn't really matter all that much to God. But each and everyone matters to God and God wants to reveal Godself to all of humanity.

Another way we sometimes easily forget that God wants to reveal Godself to all of humanity, is by thinking we somehow have a monopoly on God's revelation. Sometimes as Christians we behave like God

has revealed Godself only to certain churches and not others. Or like God only reveals Godself to the well-educated, or the wealthy or only within white western cultures. But God wants to reveal Godself to all of humanity. God has and continues to reveal Godself across any and all differences between human beings, we can come up with. And so this Epiphany season I would like to invite us all to be on the look out to learn from people, who we consider different to ourselves in one way or another. To learn from how God has and continues to reveal Godself to people, who are different from ourselves. I wonder, what new and wonderful things might we learn about God in that way? Amen.