

EPIPHANY – JANUARY 3, 2016

LET ME BEGIN WITH A QUESTION.....

*WHAT IS IT ABOUT A CHILD, PARTICULARLY AN INFANT THAT ATTRACTS
US LIKE A MAGNET?*

*THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT A CHILD THAT EXCITES US, THAT DRAWS
US TO THEM, ISN'T THERE??*

IT'S LIKE A MAGNETIC ATTRACTION ISN'T IT???

THE WAY WE ARE DRAWN TO A CHILD.....

I GUESS IT IS THE MIRACLE OF A NEW LIFE.....

THE POTENTIAL, THE BEAUTY OF A CHILD.....

*E.G. I REMEMBER AS A SMALL CHILD - ONE OF MY REAL EARLY
MEMORIES..... PROBABLY 2 OR 3 - MAYBE 4...*

WE WERE VISITING MY GRANDMA'S HOUSE...

*IT WAS AT NIGHT.....SHE LIVED IN A BIG FARM HOUSE NEAR
COLDWATER, OHIO...*

*WHEN YOU ENTERED THROUGH THE DOOR YOU WENT IMMEDIATELY
INTO THIS LARGE KITCHEN.....*

*MY AUNTS AND UNCLES WERE ALL AROUND THIS LARGE TABLE PLAYING
CARDS.....*

*WE WENT THRU THE DOOR, I WAS IN THE ARMS OF MY MOM - OR MY DAD
- I'M NOT SURE....*

ALL MY AUNTS AND UNCLES YELLED OUT.....

***"OH TOMMY! SO WONDERFUL TO SEE!" TOMMY! TOMMY!
BEING AN INTROVERT ...IT SCARED THE DEVIL OUT OF ME....
EVENTUALLY, WHOEVER WAS HOLDING ME LET ME DOWN....
AND I WENT DIRECTLY UNDER THE TABLE TO HIDE....
I WAS SURPRISED....THEY WENT ON WITH THE CARD GAME
I PROBABLY WANTED THEIR ATTENTION BUT COULDN'T HANDLE IT
YOU MAY HAVE HAD SIMILAR EXPERIENCES AS A CHILD..
WHAT IS IT ABOUT A YOUNG CHILD THAT GRABS US???
OF COURSE, THEIR INNOCENCE, THEIR ENERGY ATTRACTS US...
THERE IS A CERTAIN WISDOM IN THE OPENNESS AND VULNERABILITY OF
A CHILD....AN INNOCENCE.....
THEY ARE NOT SELF-CONSCIOUS, ESP. AS AN INFANT
THE CHILD MUST TRUST US AND RELIES ON OUR FIDELITY....
THE CHILD TEACHES US TO FORGIVE AND TO ASK FORGIVENESS....
THE CHILD SEALS AND EXPRESSES OUR LOVE, OUR COMMITMENTS.....
CHILDREN ARE RESILIENT.....AND SPONTANEOUS....
THE CHILD SHOWS US HOW TO PLAY AGAIN, HOW TO LAUGH, AND HOW
TO HUG....
CHILDREN DRAW US TOGETHER AT BAPTISMS, FIRST COMMUNIONS AND
GRADUATIONS...
WE ARE PROUD OF THEM, HAPPY FOR THEM.....
WE GO TO THEIR ENDLESS BALLGAMES, CHEER FOR THEM, ACHE FOR
THEM, HEAL THEIR HURTS AND CELEBRATE THEIR VICTORIES....***

*AND THIS FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY IS ABOUT HOW A CHILD DRAWS
PEOPLE FROM EVERY NATION AND EVERY RACE TO HIMSELF.....
EVEN CREATION IS ATTRACTED TO THE INFANT.....
IN THE STORY TODAY A STAR IS ATTRACTED TO THE CHILD...
COMES TO A REST OVER HIM.....
CLEARLY JESUS WAS A JEW....HE WAS BORN OF A JEWISH MOTHER.....HE
GREW UP IN A JEWISH HOME....HE STUDIED IN A JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.
HE WAS TAUGHT THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES.....ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS
DEATH, HE SHARED THE PASSOVER MEAL WITH HIS JEWISH FRIENDS
BUT TODAY, IT'S CLEAR HE BELONGS TO THE WORLD....
ON THIS FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY, WE CELEBRATE HIS UNIVERSAL
APPEAL BEGINNING WITH HIS INFANCY
WE CELEBRATE HIS MANIFESTATION, "HIS DEBUT" TO THE NON-JEWISH,
THE GENTILE WORLD.....
TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE GENTILE MAGI, OR WISE MEN WHO CAME
FROM THE EAST TO FIND THE NEWBORN KING OF ISRAEL...
THEY CAME FROM THE EAST.....PROBABLY TODAY IRAN/IRAQ
THE EAST, THE ORIENT WAS THE EPITOME OF THE FARAWAY PLACES
ABOUT WHICH OUR ANCESTORS COULD ONLY READ ABOUT AND DREAM
ABOUT....
THE EAST WAS FOR EARLIER GENERATIONS WHAT OUTER SPACE IS FOR
US....*

WE BELIEVE HIS LIFE, HIS MESSAGE FROM THE BEGINNING COULD NOT BE CONFINED TO ANY ONE NATION, ANY ONE RACE, ANY ONE PEOPLE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CANNOT BE SHUT UP ANYWHERE OR SHUT OUT FROM ANYTHING....

HE BELONGS TO THE WORLD AND THE WORLD BELONGS TO HIM....

IN ADDITION, HIS MESSAGE ALSO PROCLAIMED THAT IT WAS THE HUMAN PERSON, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, THAT WAS MOST SACRED TO HIM...

TO ALL RELIGIONS, SOMETHING IS SACRED....OFTEN IT IS VARIOUS RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES WHICH ARE MOST SACRED.....

JESUS' MESSAGE WAS DIFFERENT....HE RESPECTED THE LAWS BUT THEY WERE A MEANS TO BENEFIT THE PEOPLE.....

HE WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SACREDNESS OF A HUMAN PERSON, A HUMAN LIFE....

WE SEE THAT MOST CLEARLY IN THE STORY OF THE WOMAN GUILTY OF ADULTERY....

THE LAW CLEARLY INDICATED THAT SHE SHOULD BE STONED.....

NO WONDER RELIGIOUS LEADERS HATED HIM.....

WHAT WAS SACRED TO THEM WAS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT WAS SACRED TO HIM....

TO HIM PEOPLE OF ALL SORTS WERE SACRED....THE POOR AND THE RICH, YOUNG AND OLD, WOMEN AND MEN, PRIESTS AND PROSTITUTES... IT MADE ABSOLUTELY NO DIFFERENCE....

EVERY PERSON WAS SACRED IN HIS SIGHT....

AS A RESULT, ACROSS THE CENTURIES PEOPLE OF EVERY RACE AND

EVERY NATION ON EARTH HAVE FALLEN UNDER HIS SPELL.....

THEY HAVE FOUND IT EASY TO LOVE HIM, BECAUSE THEY HAVE

BELIEVED THAT HE LOVES THEM....

HENCE THAT UNIVERSAL APPEAL THAT WE CELEBRATE ON THIS FEAST

OF THE EPIPHANY....

AND HOPEFULLY THE GIFT THAT WE BRING HIM TODAY IS THAT SAME

OPENNESS TO ALL PEOPLE THAT HE EXEMPLIFIED IN HIS MESSAGE AND

HIS LIFE....

AND HOPEFULLY WE CAN PRAY WITH THE PROPHET FOR THAT SAME

WELCOMING SPIRIT AND BE ABLE TO SAY....PARAPHRASING HIM...

ALL FROM IRAN, IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, MEXICO AND HONDURAS WILL

COME.....

MUSLIMES AND JEWS, IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES.....

THE POVERTY STRICKEN AND THE UNEMPLOYED....

THE SICK, THE HUNGRY AND THE HOMELESSALL WILL COME....

AND WE WILL OFFER TO THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN WE ARE THE

SAME WELCOME THAT EACH RECEIVES FROM OUR MERCIFUL GOD

WE TOO WILL REACH OUT IN LOVE AND MERCY TO ALL

LET US PRAY IN THIS EUCHARIST FOR THAT SAME WELCOMING AND

MERCIFUL SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS AND IN OUR LIVES FOR THOSE WHO

ARE DIFFERENT THAN WE ARE....

