

Homily for
The Feast of Epiphany
Sunday January 4th, 2009

“What Kind of Epiphany Do You Need?”

For the next few moments, I would like to ask you to try and recall a time when you saw something for the very first time—and it really took your breath away. Maybe you can remember one of the first times that you saw the ocean. The first time you saw and held a newborn child, especially your own. Maybe the mountains. Or maybe it was the experience of seeing someone and falling in love instantly with them, knowing that they were the one.

(Pause)

Today we formally end the Christmas season with this feast known as Epiphany. For the next few moments I would simply invite us all to consider how the word itself can challenge us.

The simple definition of the word Epiphany is this: *“to see something for the very first time.”*

Every now and then in life, some things and even some people can, unfortunately, become so routine for us, that they lose their newness and we take them for granted. Sometimes the only way that we can break out of this cycle is to ask God to renew our vision, to place on our hearts the firm resolve to see certain things and certain people differently, in a new light.

So, today on this feast of Epiphany, that’s the question I invite us to consider: who or what do I need to see differently? What things in life, and, more importantly, what people do I need to see as if I were seeing them for the very first time?

1. The sky? The sunset? Another day of life itself?
2. My spouse? My son? My daughter?
3. Myself—as loved and forgiven?
4. There may even be some people in this church today who feel like they’ve lost the most important newness of all—people who are having trouble seeing God as real in their life at all.

What type of epiphany do you and I need to have? Because, if we desire it, God will indeed give it.

I realize that Christmas Day itself has come and gone, but I cannot help but think about the character of Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and how, by the end of that very long story, he had come to see everyone and everything in his life differently. He came to see every single person and every single moment in a new light—and that this happened because he came to see himself in a new light. He believed in himself again. He had an epiphany.

We all know that the first step toward a new vision of life and people as sacred begins with choosing to see ourselves as loved and forgiven by the very same Christ-child whom the Magi visited long ago on that first Christmas night.

This is the kind of epiphany that God wants us to have.