

Dear People of God,

A Blessed and Happy New Year to all!

Christmas morn has passed, but we continue our Christmas Season as we celebrate this weekend the Feast of the Epiphany.

What does Epiphany mean? As most of you know, Epiphany means appearance or revelation. It means a showing, a direction for our search. And interestingly enough, the scriptures imply it's a search that everyone must make. Luke, in the Gospel, has the poor searching in the form of shepherds. Matthew's Gospel, has the learned and rich searching in the form of the Magi. So the message is that there is room for everybody in this search for life's meaning and purpose, from no degrees to PhD's, from shepherds to executives.

And so to the Magi. They are three searchers who did not find the answer to life in their horoscopes, but took a long and difficult journey to another country in search of the Christ.

The Feast of the Epiphany means finding Christ. It is not a one-time thing. Rather, finding the Lord is a life-long quest, like a marriage or a profound friendship. And we, like the Magi, gather to focus on the One who lives us and abides with us. The more we connect the way of Jesus with our story—if searching is our road, then finding will be our home.

Epiphany is about dreams, hopes, searching and direction. The destination is not as critical as the journey. In our life, what are we searching for and what are we finding? We sometimes seek happiness in all the wrong places. Dream big dreams! However, in our search, always keep our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ and the doors will open we never dreamed possible.

As we begin a new year, many resolutions are made: lose weight, control temper, learn to relax or spend more time with the family. Many talk about reducing stress in their lives. I share with you the following which does connect with the Feast of the Epiphany. Enjoy . . . and pass it on . . .

Stress Management

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on. As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again.

When we're refreshed we can carry on with the burden. So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can."

So why not take a while to just simply RELAX. Put down anything that may be a burden to you right now. Don't pick it up again until after you rested a while. Life is short! Enjoy it!

Blessings in the New Year,

Fr. Greg