

Closure of Mount St Joseph Health Care Unit

Mount St Joseph Chapel

January 28, 2013

Epiphany times three...

One night, into a dark and hidden place, three Kings arrive, guided by the brilliant light of a single star. They enter, pay homage and give recognition to the newly born baby, to the new life that is there, and then they leave, making their way back home.

Years later, John is preaching penance on the banks of the river Jordan, summoning his listeners to let go of what they know and challenging them to accept a new way of seeing and living. Jesus arrives and enters into John's baptismal waters. A dove appears and there is brilliant light and blessing descending from above. With his friends, Jesus leaves that place to begin his work.

A few months later, there is a big wedding celebration taking place in the town of Cana and everyone is having a good time. But the wine is running out. This party could end up being a major embarrassment. Mary and Jesus exchange words and Jesus asks that the empty jars be filled with water and, wonder of wonder, the disaster is averted! The jars of water, on tasting, now contain fine wine and the celebration has new life. Jesus, his mother and his companions, leave that place and go down to Capernaum.

How extraordinary and yet how very real these three events. First we are invited to let ourselves experience the journey of the Kings guided by the star into a brief moment of profound recognition and grace. Then, we are challenged by the harsh words of John the Baptist, calling for sacrifice and penance when suddenly, out of nowhere, comes the brilliance and the blessing that accompany Jesus' baptism.

Moving on, we find ourselves celebrating with the folks at the wedding feast and when Mary says, "they have no wine," our hearts sink and we feel the fear of a potentially very bad ending to this celebration. In the space of a moment, however, our mood changes, our fear is lifted and we are back to celebrating the joy and gladness of the wedding feast.

In our personal and communal lives, we have experienced many small and not so small Epiphanies, moments of homage and recognition, experiences of light and blessing, occasions of celebration and joy, friendship and love, fullness of life and goodness.

This evening, we are paying homage to and recognizing the Epiphanies of life and healing that have marked the Health Care Unit of Mount St. Joseph.

We are remembering and thanking God for the brilliance and the blessings that have accompanied the sisters and personnel in the holy and sacred space that is the Health Care Unit at Mount St. Joseph.

We are celebrating the friendships that flourished here and rejoicing in the love, tenderness and compassion that flowed, day and night, for fifty five years, in the place that is the Health Care Unit of Mount St. Joseph.

We are remembering and honoring the many sisters and others whose last days on earth were lived here.

We are remembering and thanking those sisters who recently moved from Mount St. Joseph to St. Joseph Residence in Seattle.

We are honoring and thanking all those who have served at Mount St. Joseph as care-givers, administrators, support staff and as members of the community life teams....so many persons, so many moments of grace and goodness, so many Epiphanies that have been lived.

In our reading of the Gospel Epiphany narratives, we can't help but notice that they conclude with departures. The Kings leave to go back to their homes, Jesus leaves the banks of the Jordan to begin his work and Mary, Jesus and their friends leave the wedding celebration and go down to Capernaum.

Our Epiphany experiences, like those in the Gospel narratives, include departures. Actually, an Epiphany is that moment of light, of grace, given to us by God as we journey together as God's people. The Kings did not linger; they fulfilled their purpose and they moved on. Jesus did not put up a tent on the banks of the Jordan so that he could bask in the light of his baptism. He moved on. Mary and Jesus knew that it was time for them to leave the wedding celebration and they left and went down to Capernaum.

Knowing when it is time to move on and doing it, leaving even when it is hard and painful, seems to be one of the hallmarks of Gospel discipleship.

And in our reading of the Gospel, we also notice that the departure that occurs at the end of the Epiphany experience is a prelude for the next Epiphany. If Jesus had stayed on the banks of the Jordan, we would not have had the miracle, the Epiphany at Cana. The same is true for us. Our lives are a journey with graced moments along the way.

Just as our Epiphanies occur in time and space as well as in the depths of our hearts, so too our departures take place in time and space and are integral to our life and journey with God.

As we bless the Health Care Unit this evening, we thank God for the Epiphanies that have been ours here in this place. We thank God for the graces and blessings we have received, for the friendships and for the opportunities we have had to serve and to love.

And, in the spirit of the Gospel, we are moving on, knowing that other Epiphanies await us and we don't want to miss them. We want to be there, in the next place, open to recognize and to receive the new life that is coming and with deep faith, to offer our homage to the God of life.

We want to arrive on the banks of our next Epiphany, ready to be blinded by the brilliance of God's love and ready to hear the words, "This is my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased."

We have received an invitation to the feast of the God of life and so we move on in order to be there to experience the grace of another Epiphany, the joy and the gladness of new friendships.

Yes, we want to be there, ready to welcome the new life, ready to receive the brightness of God's love and presence, ready to celebrate with the miracle of fine, new wine, Yes, ready for the surprise that is always at the heart of an Epiphany.

And so, this evening as we bless the Health Care Unit at Mount St. Joseph, we can say together with full and grateful hearts, with hearts that are open and ready:

Providence of God, we believe in you.

Providence of God, we hope in you.

Providence of God, we love you with all our hearts.

Providence of God, we thank you for all.

Kathryn Rutan, SP