Sermon on Epiphany

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Epiphany 4B January 28, 2024

Mark 1:21-28

We are in the Season of Epiphany.  Over the past four weeks, what have you learned or what is something that has stood out to you?

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Let me recap a few things that stand out to me.  We celebrate the Feast of Epiphany on January 6, the day we remember when non-Jews traveled to Bethlehem to pay homage to Jesus.  We remember the Baptism of Jesus on the following Sunday.  We hear about the call of Philip, Andrew, Simon, James, and John, on the two successive Sundays after that.  And today we hear that demons recognize Jesus while people are trying to figure out who he is.  All of these stories are about telling us who Jesus is.  All of these events have to do with revelation and manifestation.

We are in the Season of Epiphany.  We are in the season of revelation and manifestation.  Robin Williams once did a skit on the top ten reasons to be an Episcopalian.  Number five on that list was that the church year is color coded:  blue, white, green, purple, red, white, and green again. Each season has its own color for a specific reason.  The Season of Epiphany is green because it’s about growth.  We grow into the knowledge that Jesus is the revealed embodiment of God incarnate.

I bring this up because, as we traverse the seasons of the year, it just might be that Epiphany is the one season appropriate for the entire year.  In one way or another, Christ is being revealed in Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and beyond.  Christ is always being revealed to us.  We should be looking to reveal Christ to others and to manifest him in our own lives.  Our lives, and the whole year, are simply one, long Season of Epiphany – a season of revelation and manifestation.

In about an hour we will gather for our annual meeting.  We will share a meal and we will do the business of the parish.  To be honest, I don’t know anyone who gets excited about annual meetings – well, I know one, but she gets excited about strange stuff.  Annual meetings are often boring.  They can be too long.  In every parish I’ve been in, someone always has a habit of taking the microphone and won’t – stop – talking.  Sometimes people argue.  And every so often people yell at the priest for things done and undone, for using the wrong wine at Communion, or for any number of misdoings, real or perceived.

Ah yes, the annual meeting where we gather to proclaim the love of God and work to reveal Christ to the world.

Actually, that is exactly what the annual meeting should be about – how we proclaim and reveal Christ to the world around us.  We will certainly look back and review all we have done in 2023; and in our looking back, we can use that as our starting point for 2024.

We are in the Season of Epiphany, the season of revelation and manifestation.  Our Patron Saint is Saint Luke.  He is traditionally known as a physician and evangelist.  Here’s a question for you: how many books of the bible did Luke write, and can you name them?  And no, this is not a trick question.

The author we know as Luke, and the person we have claimed as our Patron Saint, wrote two books – the gospel bearing his name and the Acts of the Apostles.  This is important for us to know as we move forward.

It’s important because in the Gospel according to Luke, we are given a record of how Jesus is revealed to be God incarnate.  Through his birth, baptism, interactions, healings, miracles, and eventual resurrection, the revelation of Jesus as Son of God is woven throughout the gospel story.

It’s important because in the Acts of the Apostles, we are given a record of how Jesus is manifested to the world through the Church.  Through the actions, interactions, miracles, martyrdoms, and witness of the early Church, the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus is manifested to the world around them.

We are in the Season of Epiphany.  We are in the season of revelation and manifestation.  Our patron, Saint Luke, wrote about these two things in his gospel and the book of Acts.  Church seasons come and go, and we mark each season with appropriate celebrations and liturgies.  While those are all important and we should pay attention to each, what if we looked at all of 2024 as an Epiphany season?  What if we actively looked for times and opportunities to reveal Christ to those around us?  What if we manifested Christ in our own lives in such a way that people took notice?

Christ is alive and well, but it’s up to us to make him known.  I challenge you to see 2024 as one, long Season of Epiphany.  I challenge you to reveal and manifest Christ in such a way that causes people to come and see what this is all about.

Amen.