

PASTOR'S CORNER



Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Before the reforms of the liturgical calendar after the Second Vatican Council, liturgical seasons were a good bit more complex. There were special weeks that followed Epiphany, octaves that followed other feasts like Pentecost, preparatory weeks before Lent, quarterly penitential days, and more. Much of this has been 'simplified' into 'Ordinary Time'.

Yet vestiges of the old calendar remain because it actually made a lot of sense. And the weeks that follow Epiphany have some of those vestiges.

We use the word 'epiphany' when we get a bright idea, but the word really points to an appearance or a manifestation, especially of the divine. The Christmas season is not simply a celebration of the incarnation – of God becoming Man – it is a celebration of that incarnation being made manifest to the world. It's not a coincidence that Matthew and Luke do not simply stop at Jesus' birth, but they also have to tell us of how that birth was made known to the simple shepherds of Judea and the great wise men of the nations. It's hard to rejoice in something you don't know and haven't even imagined. The joy of Christmas is not just that Jesus has come, but that he has revealed that coming, revealed who he is, and made himself known to us.

Traditionally there are three events that are part of Epiphany: the first is when Jesus is made manifest to the Gentiles in the star and the visit of the magi, who, recognizing his divinity, *prostrate themselves and do him homage*. The second is his baptism when the worship of the Trinity is revealed as the Heavens open, and the Father's voice bears witness to him, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove confirms the meaning of the words. The third is the First of the Signs, the Wedding Feast at Cana when our Lord manifests himself through performing his first great miracle.

It's a bit unfortunate that the Sunday after the Baptism isn't always the Wedding Feast at Cana so we would experience this great trifacta. But it is always from the Gospel of John and continuing to reflect on the themes of Epiphany, especially our Lord's Baptism. We may be back in green but we're not done quite done with the incarnation and manifestation of *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*.

In Christ, through Mary,

Fr. Dominic David Maichrowicz, OP