

The Bells of Saint Mary

January, 2010

With My Hand on the Plow:
Seeking the Light

Happy New Year! I am really happy to have 2010 and all the possibilities that a new year means before us. This past year was a hard one for many of us. The struggles with our economy, two wars that continued apace, and the unemployment that has brought a sense of despair to so many, has made it difficult for some of us to seek the Light. If we were to believe the constant doom and gloom from the television, the news and magazines, we would think the whole world was going nowhere but down. But the brilliance of the Light that we seek and follow keeps in perspective the truth that we live by...it is Jesus where our hope rests, and it is the Spirit who guides us through all our days. The hard days we have seen, and the endless possibilities of the ones before us.

Christians have always lived in hope. The Wise Ones of old followed a star to find the Savior of the world, and when they finally came to him, could only kneel and bow at the sight they encountered...here was the hope of every generation to come, nestled in humble circumstances with his mother and father to care for him. Attended by all living things, hope was born, and continues for us, and all generations after. As we enter into the season of Epiphany..."living in the Light" as I like to think of

it, let's remember a few things:

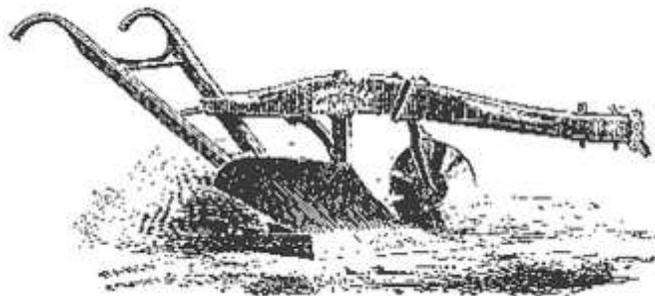
We live by grace. What is Grace? Grace is God's love in action. Grace is everything we are and have been given, even though we have done nothing to deserve the gift that God has given us.

We are to live lives worthy of the gift. In 1 John 4:10 we read "*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*" (NIV)

We are to help all people discover what we know. We know that the Bible says in Acts 10:35 "*It makes no differ-*

ence who you are or where you are from—if you want God and are ready to do as he says, the door is open." (The Message)

I invite you this Epiphany to think on these things. Be a bright light for others. Be proud of your church and invite your neighbors to come with you to worship. Share with all you meet the light that is inside of you...the light of Christ born on Christmas, revealed to the world at Epiphany, and shining forever to a dark and troubled world. This is a remarkable gift we have been given we folks who gather at St. Mary's. We have been given a beautiful church filled with wonderful giving people who love Jesus and are trying their very best to do the right thing. I guess



what I am saying to you is this: *you are doing a great job with each other...work on the rest of the world!*

(And don't worry...we'll leave the Light on for you...)

With my hand on the plow,
Fr. Michael

Christian Formation

Guiding Lights

Our culture doesn't pay too much attention to Epiphany. Fortunately, the church is wiser. Epiphany is a great season to combat the post Christmas let down, with its exhaustion, debt, weight gain and other guilts. Epiphany is a season of celebrations, light, gifts, music and renewed purpose, all without the perceived pressure of Christmas.

The name Epiphany comes from the Greek word "Epiphania", which means to show, make known or reveal. The

feast day is observed on January 6. The Epiphany season reminds us of the three miracles that manifest the divinity of Christ. The celebration originated in the Eastern Church in AD 361, beginning as a commemoration of the birth of Jesus. Later additional meanings were added – the visit

of the three Magi, Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle at the wedding in Cana. These three events are central to the meaning of Epiphany. They are all of a public nature, emphasizing the idea that God comes to all people. The light shines in the darkness so that all might see and come to know and be encouraged by the hope that is Christ.

I wonder if the Magi lived today, if they would even be able to see that Christmas star, in the midst of our overly lit cities that often obliterate the full splendor of the night sky. In my spiritual journey I am often at a loss for guideposts and direction. I long for a clear sign or signal of God's direction for my life. I know as Christians we

are all responsible for showing forth the light of God's love in the world. The Wise men brought gifts of great portent and meaning to the Christ child. We too are called upon to bring forth our gifts.

Epiphany is the perfect season to dig in to our spiritual treasure chests to see what gifts and

tools our Lord has endowed each of us with. Unwrapping these gifts takes prayer, self scrutiny and honesty. The value of these gifts can only be measured in their purposefulness and our commitment to take God's message out into the world. To be beacons of light in the dark, forsaken



Christmas Pageant rehearsal: The innkeeper tells Mary (Sarah Cunningham) and Joseph that all of the rooms have been taken, while Trudy Ardizzone makes final edits to the script. (John Beeler photo.)

places is our call this Epiphany. Discovering our gifts is not for bragging rights, self aggrandizement, or even choice assignments to serve only our own congregation. To take the light of Christ into the world requires boldness and confidence, imagination and commitment, courage and sacrifice, prayer and perspiration, empathy and perseverance, and an ability and desire to see beyond the needs of our own small circles.

This Epiphany season our Sunday Morning Learning Circles will offer us the opportunity to discover and explore our spiritual gifts. Our three part series will be grounded in scripture, particularly the work of St. Paul. Personal inventories will be looked at for their translation into concrete ministries. God willing, this will give us all renewed vigor for recommitting ourselves to a comprehensive Ministry Fair at the start of Lent. Check the Learning Circles Schedule.

Trudy Ardizzone, Missioner for Christian Formation

St. Mary's Epiphany Celebration

Everyone is invited to participate in a very special Epiphany Celebration on Sunday January 3. We will begin in the Parish Hall at 9:00 AM for our Learning Circle time. We will explore our knowledge of Epiphany, play some games, and hear the story of "Old Befana". We will help create stars for our worship time. Our three Kings and

other significant characters in our Christmas story will be called back as we help our wise men accomplish their journey to Bethlehem. During worship we will tell the story one more time from a different perspective as we sing carols of stars and light. After worship there will be a "Medieval Celebration for All Ages" in the Parish Hall. You will discover your fortune for the New Year, toast to each other's health with some wassail, sing, dance, help crown the king and queen,

play some games and eat some traditional food. Contact Trudy ASAP if you would like to help with the preparations.

The One Night Book Club

On Tuesday February 2 at 7:00 PM in the Parish Hall we will hold our second "One Night Book Club". Some of you may have already read, or received as a gift, the book *The Lost Symbol* by Dan Brown. Dan

Brown is the author of *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons*. *The Lost Symbol* takes place in Washington DC, and explores the connection of our founding fathers with the Masons, and the hidden messages in the art and architecture of our capitol. There are some interesting theological statements to discuss and debate, as well as all the juicy plot twists. Bring a friend and a dessert to share if you wish. We will supply the beverages and a cozy fire for a lively winter's evening of talk and fellowship. Contact Trudy if you have any questions.



This crèche (in Trudy's office) reminds me of the one my parents had when I was growing up. (John Beeler photo.)

Confirmation and Inquirer's Class

The Bishop will be coming to St. Mary's on May 16. On February 28 we will be starting our Confirmation and Inquirer's class on Sundays from 9 to 10:00 AM. The ten week class will use "My Faith, My Life" for teens and "Your Faith, Your Life" for adults. The class is required for those who wish to be confirmed. It is also open to those who are new to the church or anyone seeking a deeper knowledge and understanding of our beliefs and practices. Pre-registration is required so that the books may be ordered. The cost of the books is \$15. Scholarships are available. Please see Trudy or Fr. Michael to sign up.

Adult Sunday Morning Learning Circles

- Jan. 3 Epiphany Celebration for all ages
- Jan.10 Contemporary Music-Joe Ardizzone-in the church
- Jan.17 Contemporary Music
- Jan. 24 Annual Meeting-No Learning Circles-One Service -10AM
- Jan. 31 Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts 1-Scripture and Theology
- Feb. 7 Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts 2-Personal Inventory
- Feb.14 Discovering You Gifts 3-Translating Gifts into Ministry
- Feb. 28 Confirmation Inquirer's Class begins



These pages: Bringing in the "Angel Tree" gifts at the December 20th service, and the crèche displays. (All photos by John Beeler.)



Left: Cynthia LeRoy (gift from Nancy Straight.)

Right: Rob and Michelle Newcomb.



The Bat in the Belfry

Hi! It's me (or is that "I"?) Anyway, your Bat friend is here and hoping you got all you wanted for Christmas. I got just what I wanted -- the Illustrated Oxford Dictionary! You'll be relieved to know that it's too heavy for me to lift, so I'm not likely to drop it on anybody. And since Father Michael decreed that the theme for the January "Bells" is "Seeking the Light", I flew immediately to look up the word "light" in my new treasure.

Some of the definitions for light that I found are these: an appearance of brightness; a flame or spark serving to ignite; mental illumination, elucidation, enlightenment; an eminent person; free from sorrow, cheerful and lots of others. However, the ones I've listed made me think, and I love to search for hidden messages, and I love mysteries (I mean, how many Bats do you know who own every single episode of the PBS series, "Sherlock Holmes"? But I digress.)

Let's look at those definitions. "An appearance of brightness" --how else did the shepherds and the Magi find that manger? That "brightness" must have been a star to end all



Above: Creche displayed by Ruth Hicks.



How does a dinky little bat manage even to open the cover of a huge dictionary...can you say "flight muscles?"... I like the way you say that! (Apologies to Fred Rogers.)

stars! What about "a flame or spark serving to ignite"? The Holy Spirit can spark great change and great good! "Mental illumination, elucidation, enlightenment" comes directly from the Lessons and the Gospel we hear each Sunday. Then, we come to that "eminent person". Do I really have to tell you who I'm thinking of? The definition that speaks to being "free from sorrow, cheerful" tells me that I'm in the company of members of the family of Christians at St. Mary's. We are joyful because of that brightness, that flame and spark, the mental illumination and that Eminent Person. I could give you lots of other definitions, but I think God said it best: "Let there be Light!" and there just was. It lit our world, and it came again even brighter with the appearance of Jesus, the brightest, the best, the Savior!

Gotta go look up some more good stuff! See you later.

Love and blessings from Bede, the Bat in the St. Mary's Belfry



January Birthdays

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Jacqueline Chandler | 01/05 |
| Jonatha Linn | 01/05 |
| Stephanie Brownell | 01/06 |
| Tiffany Brownell | 01/06 |
| Denise Laufer | 01/06 |
| Jenna Daley | 01/10 |
| Audrey Bowman | 01/11 |
| Ruth Groulx | 01/12 |
| Ella "Dede" Dunn | 01/16 |
| Barbara Holt | 01/16 |



Below: Clive Foy and Joe Gonzales reenact Saint Nicholas giving alms to the poor. (John Beeler photo.)



Above: Clive Foy portrayed Saint Nicholas,

January Work Party

If you are a member of Team Mark, **it's your turn to help keep the church looking good on January 9th at 8:30 AM.** Members are: Joe Gonzales (team leader), Rachel Williams (lunches), Alice and Peter Drus, Kathy Gonzales, Cory and Anne Gusland, Dan Hayes, Heidi Holdsambeck, Margie Coe, and Frank and Jane Longley.

Seeking the Light

January 2010

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| 27 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM Choral Holy Eucharist | 28 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Alanon meetings | 29 | 30 | 31 OFFICE CLOSED - NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY | 1 OFFICE CLOSED - NEW YEAR'S DAY HOLIDAY | 2 |
| 3 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM Choral Holy Eucharist | 4 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Alanon meetings | 5 | 6 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM EFM | 7 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist 4:45 PM - 6:15 PM Feed the Homeless 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal | 8 | 9 Martha's Guild Tea Workshop 8:30 AM Team Mark-Work Party |
| 10 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM Choral Holy Eucharist | 11 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Alanon meetings | 12 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Stephen's Ministers Mtg | 13 5:15 PM - 6:15 PM Finance MDT Meeting 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM EFM | 14 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Worship MDT Meeting 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal | 15 | 16 |
| 17 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM Choral Holy Eucharist | 18 HOLIDAY - OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Alanon meetings | 19 | 20 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM EFM | 21 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal | 22 | 23 |
| 24 10:00 AM - 11:30 Choral Holy Eucharist and Annual Meeting | 25 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Alanon meetings | 26 | 27 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM EFM | 28 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal | 29 | 30 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Vestry Retreat |
| 31 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist 10:00 AM - 11:30 PM Choral Holy Eucharist 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM CCC - Community Service | 1 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Alanon meetings | 2 | 3 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM EFM | 4 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist 4:45 PM - 6:15 PM Feed the Homeless 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal | 5 | 6 |

For an update on events please go to: www.stmaryslompoc.org

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St. Mary's Episcopal Church
2800 Harris Grade Road
Lompoc, CA 93436
www.stmaryslompoc.org

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Looking at Lent

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Sunday Eucharist
8:00 AM and 10:00AM

Church Office Hours
Mon - Fri 10 AM - 4 PM

Telephone: (805) 733-4400
Fax: (805) 733-4405

E-Mail Addresses:

Fr. Michael:
rector@stmaryslompoc.org
Deacon Judy Lin:
deacon@stmaryslompoc.org
Elizabeth:
admin@stmaryslompoc.org
Trudy:
formation@stmaryslompoc.org
Wardens and Clerk:
vestry@stmaryslompoc.org
Bells Editor:
john.beeler@verizon.net