

Homily — Epiphany 2018 (B)
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The word EPIPHANY has to do with an experience
that's startling and unexpected,
that gives you a new perspective on life,
that's a revelation, a new insight,
that gives you a sense of the glory and
that lies just beneath the surface of what seems so ordinary.

The epiphany story we just heard comes from St. Matthew.
The story is a great example again of what is called biblical narrative.
This is not a LITERAL retelling about people, places and times.
This telling is meant to stir us to dream about a better world.
It's meant to stir us to dream about GOD'S DREAM of a better world.
It's meant to stir us to dream about our place in creating God's better world.
It's meant to be an invitation to leave what's familiar
and to follow the star, to follow the light, to follow *your* light,
wherever that light might lead.

There are gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh in the story.
Gold perhaps reminds us that this tiny, apparently insignificant, infant
is the true king of the universe.
Incense perhaps reminds us that this apparently helpless infant
is the true priest of God most high.
Myrrh, used for embalming the dead, perhaps to remind us of the sacrifice
this child will eventually make to bring the world to peace.

Through our BAPTISM we are all incorporated into the Christ
who is king and priest and suffering prophet.

There was an editorial in yesterday's *Toledo Blade*
by David Brooks of *The New York Times*.
Brooks talks about the homily Pope Francis gave on New Year's Eve.
In that homily the pope spoke of the essential role ordinary people have
in bringing God's dream to fulfillment.
The pope refers to ordinary people as "ARTISANS TO THE COMMON GOOD"
So typical of Pope Francis, he brings it right down to everyday life.
The pope talked about something as ordinary as driving a car.

Brooks refers to driving as the sort of everyday activity
by which people shape the culture of their community.
He says kindness breeds kindness, but aggression breeds aggression.
We can choose to be artisans of cooperation
or we can be artisans of competition and a dog-eat-dog kind of world.
He says that driving puts you in a constant position of asking,
"Are my needs more important than everybody else's
or are we all in this together?"

"See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples,
but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears God's glory.
Nations shall walk by your light."

Be artisans of the light.

"Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body
and copartners ... in the Gospel
Gentiles are really all those we treat like outsiders, as different,
those we call "illegals," folks whose skin is darker.

In a moment we will listen to
a solemn, ritual proclamation of the date of Easter,
the most amazing Epiphany of them all.
It says what the angel said to Mary, "with God all things are possible".

God's dream is possible.
Be artisans of the common good.