

Bishop's Office Message for January, 2004

Dear Partners in Ministry,

January 6 is the feast of the Epiphany. We celebrate the coming of wise men to find and worship the infant Jesus as King of kings. Jesus is Lord of all, yet comes in the form of a vulnerable baby, under the shadow of a despotic king who rules at the behest of a foreign empire. The departure of the wise men without their informing the king of Jesus' whereabouts triggers the slaughter of the innocents. Yet this new-born king ushered in a new age of peace in this world of violence. His coming was marked by a star, and the image of Epiphany is light overcoming darkness.

Our world still feels very dark at times, but during Epiphany we affirm our faith in Jesus, who brings light into our dark world. In our northern hemisphere, we celebrate Epiphany just after the sun begins its march northward, and we notice the lengthening days. It is a powerful image as we watch the growing light pushing back the darkness of winter. The amazing thing is that Jesus shares his light with us and sends us out with it into the darkest corners of our world, whether that is in our own communities or in nations around the globe. We can confront violence, discrimination, and injustice, not with the force of might, but with the self-giving love of Jesus who came to give himself for all that all might have life in abundance. "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you!" (Is. 60:1)

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