**Homily for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord***Rev. Francis D. Kim*

There is a famous jewish story.

One day, a rabbi asked to his students, “How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?”

One of the students told, “Day begins when, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep.”

“No,” answered the rabbi.

Another student asked, “Is it when you can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine?”

Again, the answer was, “No.” “Please tell us the answer, then,” said the students.

“It is,” said the rabbi, “when you can look into the face of other human beings, and you have enough light in you to recognize them as your brothers and sisters. Up until then, it is night, and darkness is still with us.”

Yes. As long as there is division, bias, and prejudice, as long as we don’t love each other as brothers and sisters, we are still in the darkness, we are still at night waiting for the Light.

Today, we are celebrating the Epiphany of Christ. This special Feast commemorates the revealing of Jesus Christ as the true light of the world to all nations. The Greek word for ‘Epiphany’ means ‘to show upon,’ ‘to appear.’ So, we are reminded of the manifestation of the glory of Christ to all people. On Christmas day, through the Birth of Jesus, we see the true Light. And, this week, through the Magi, we see the Light of hope, joy, and peace to the world for all nations.

The Gospel tells that the Magi came to Child Jesus, and how they were led by a star. The visitation of the Magi is a very dramatic event. These men were not Israelites, but foreigners. In their thirst for searching for God, they willingly left everything, their home and country and went on a long journey from the East. In their diligent search, they led by the brilliant star in the sky. To them, the light of the star was a symbol of hope, joy, and peace. When they found the newborn King, they humbly worshiped Him with great joy, and then, gave Him precious gifts.

One important meaning of this story, of these magi traveling by night looking toward the sky, is that Jesus Christ is the perfect Light and hope to everyone. This is the message of Epiphany. As these magi traveled through the night guided only by a star, whatever our darkness, however deep the night, the true Light of Jesus is also there in our journey of faith.

We are on a spiritual journey with a destination, guided by the star in our life. So, The Epiphany is not just about a visit by these foreign travelers to Jerusalem centuries ago. It is about the journey of everyone toward God. So, the Magi story is also our story!

Now, the holiday season and Christmas parties are over. As Christmas trees get put out, lights and decorations are taken down and put away, and no doubt fitness centers fill up with people trying to lose the weight they gained from eating all those Christmas food. After this joyful season, what remains in your life?

The best and most important gift is the Light of Jesus Christ. The most attractive part of this beautiful season is not the lights or decorations. It is Jesus Christ, our Savior.

So, as we celebrate this feast today, we are also to recognize and realize its challenge: to receive the true Light of Christ in our lives and to be living reflections of this Light for all people. Just as the Magi traveled far to visit and pay homage to the newborn King, so do we praise and worship Christ as we gather each Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist, and are sent forth to take Christ to the world.

We always are led by the true Light, Jesus Christ in our life’s journey, and we also are called to be a light in the world. So, today’s celebration is not just about receiving or talking about the Light of Jesus Christ. It is also about bringing that Light to others, especially, to those who are in darkness.

As the wise men went on a journey to Jesus, we all have a journey to Jesus, our Savior. This week, let us reflect on the Light of Christ that has come upon us. We should be shining in the world in the fullness of true Light that Jesus has given us.