

Forming Good Stewards

Good stewards are formed by other good stewards!

Please make sure this is distributed to the **pastor**, to the other **priest** and **deacons** in the parish, and to the **person who produces the bulletin**.

Bulletin Bites

January 7, 2018
The Epiphany of the Lord
Matthew 2:1-12

Option 1

“Magi came from the east.

The prostrated themselves and did him homage”

An epiphany is the sudden realization or comprehension of the essence or meaning of something. The magi came from the east, probably present day Iran, to search for a newly born child that they believed would be the Messiah promised to the Israelites. They obviously had read the Torah and the prophets. They understood the essence or the meaning of the signs in the skies. They made a very arduous and dangerous trip through a hostile desert just to see the child; to prostrate themselves and pay him homage and give him valuable gifts. The child that they saw we now believe is Jesus, Son of Mary, who lived, died, and rose from the dead for our salvation and to give us an example of how to live in relation to our God. How far are we willing to travel to pay homage to Jesus? What inconveniences, difficulties and risk are we willing to endure to demonstrate our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. The magi were truly “wise men.” Are we an equally wise People of God?

Option 2

Behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?"

The identity and origin of the “*magi* from the east” is still debated by historians, theologians, anthropologist, and archaeologist. Most people would say that “There were *three* wise men.” St. Matthew does not say that there were *three*. Men around the world studied the culture, the writings, the religions and the history of peoples other than their own. They believed in signs that told of great events. When the *magi* observed signs they believed told of a child descended from King David, born in Bethlehem, to be the *Anointed One* promised by God, they incurred the expense and endured the difficulty and perils of a long journey through hostile territory. They did not come to ask anything of the child. They brought gifts that signified His mission for all mankind and what He would suffer to fulfill that mission. Do we truly believe Jesus is the *Anointed One*? Do we act as if we believe? What are we willing to do, to give, to risk, to endure to act on that belief? Such are gifts we can offer to celebrate the Epiphany of Jesus.

January 14, 2018
Second Sunday In Ordinary Time
John 1:35-42

Option 1
“Behold the Lamb of God.”

Today’s Psalm, “Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will” is the response of John the Baptist to God’s call to “prepare the way of the Lord.” People were drawn to John, not because he proclaimed his own greatness, but because he understood that there was one to come after him who was greater than he. When he saw Jesus walk by he proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God.” John accepted and fulfilled his role to prepare the way for the “man who ranks ahead of me” and not to seek his won glory. He directed his followers to Jesus. They became his disciples and eventually responded to God, “Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.” Do we accept the role God has given to us and stand ready to say, “Here I am, Lord, I have come to do your will!” when God calls us to be all that he has created us to be and prepare the way for Jesus to enter our lives and the lives of others.

Option 2
He said to them, "Come, and you will see."

In the time of Jesus few people, called *scribes*, could read or write. The Torah and other books were rare. Students listened to teachers, called rabbis, not all of whom could read or write. Such rabbis were valued for their understanding of Scripture. They rarely, if ever, sent their students [disciples] to another rabbi. John knew that the *scribes* could read the law but Jesus understood the intent of the Lawgiver. John sent his disciples to Jesus, who asked “Where are you staying?” They were really asking, “What do you teach?” Jesus did not embark on a theological dissertation. He said, “Come, and you will see.” John’s disciples followed Jesus and learned from his life and teaching. They saw and believed. They tried to imitate Jesus. When they failed, they tried again. We have the benefit of Scripture and Tradition, and more than 2000 years of Christian models who risked much and sacrificed all to imitate Jesus. It is not too late in the new year to resolve to do our best to imitate Jesus. And if we fail, we can try again.

January 21, 2018
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mk 1:14-20

Option 1
“Jesus saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea;
they were fishermen.”

Brothers, Simon and Andrew were fisherman on the deep and sometimes treacherous Sea of Galilee. They tended their nets, repaired their boats, went out on the waters day and night in hope of finding fish to fill their nets. If they were fortunate to make a catch they had to manually haul in their nets, row to shore, dock their boats, sort their catch, bring them to market, and do it all over again. It was a tough life, they were rugged people. Jesus calls them to become fishers of men. Mark tells us they abandoned their nets and followed Jesus. They probably continued fishing to earn a livelihood, but they did follow Jesus to learn from his teaching and carry on his

mission. They eventually learned that fishing for men is at least as difficult and dangerous as fish, if not more so. Through Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, Jesus is calling us to fishers of others by imitating him and being a person for others. Are we willing to follow Jesus?

Option 2

“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

After a lifetime of struggling to catch fish from the Sea of Galilee and building a business with Simon and Andrew, Zebedee surely hoped his sons, James and John, would take over and relieve him of the labor of casting nets into the Sea and the dangers of the life of a fisherman. Then a man comes along and calls his sons to become *fishers of men* and they drop his nets and leave him. James and John could not have known what awaited them. Their mother apparently thought Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom and asked that her sons sit at his side. But it is Zebedee, with the wisdom that sometimes comes with age, who understood the real implications and challenges of the invitation of Jesus to his sons to become *fishers of men*; to be men who by what they say and do challenge others to do good and avoid evil; who choose right rather than wrong; who imitate Jesus and accept the consequences. Zebedee must have been pleased with his sons. Are we prepared to be *fishers of men* to lead others to God by imitating Jesus?

January 28, 2018

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 1:21-28

Option 1

“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?”

Capernaum was a small town on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee where Simon [Peter] and his brother Andrew operated their fishing business in partnership with Zebedee, father of James and John. Archaeologists have found what they believe to be the synagogue in the town, and next to it, the home of Simon. When confronted by Jesus, the “unclean spirits” in the man in that synagogue challenged him to declare and reveal his identity and authority. Jesus was reluctant to do that, but he commanded the “unclean spirits,” “Quiet, come out of him.” The people were amazed. Do we harbor “unclean spirits” such as ingratitude to God for all he has given us and failure to demonstrate our appreciation for all that we are, all that we have, and all that we every will be by using everything to the best of our ability for ourselves and for others? Despite all God has revealed to us through Scripture and Tradition, do we demand that Jesus further reveal himself to us before we let him drive out those “unclean spirits”? If we would only let Jesus heal us, people would be amazed. We would be amazed.

Option 2

“He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.”

Capernaum where Jesus lived with Simon [Peter] was a small town on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Simon and his brother Andrew operated their fishing business with Zebedee, father of James and John. Archaeologists have found what they believe to be the synagogue in Capernaum, and next to it, the home of Simon. It is in that synagogue that the man with *unclean spirits* confronted by Jesus and challenged him to reveal his identity and authority. Jesus chose not to, but commanded the *unclean spirits*, “Quiet, come out of him.” People were amazed. Do

we harbor *unclean spirits* such as *ingratitude* to God for all he has given us and *failure to demonstrate our appreciation* for all that we are, all that we have, and all that we every will be by *failing to use* everything to the best of our ability for *ourselves* and *for others*? Do we demand that Jesus reveal himself in some special way before we let him drive out our *unclean spirits*? If we would only let Jesus heal us, people would be amazed. We would be amazed.