

Epiphany 2016

Arise, shine, for your light has come!

As I write this, the surrounding areas of our fair city are barely beginning the work of clean-up from recent historic floods. We are still reeling, and daily dealing with racial profiling, police brutality, and the so-called Ferguson effect that spreads across the nation. Unemployment is burgeoning, with numbers that are deceiving because so many have fallen off the books. Our political system is so out of control that we are a laughing stock around the world. Our U.S. bishops mostly do not have ears to hear the only compassionate pope this Church has seen in 50 years. People all around the world walk in darkness: darkness of disease, of war, of famine, of abuse, of prejudice, of poverty, of the chaos of a cosmos gone amok at the hands of greedy and ignorant humankind.

But scripture still tells us our light has come. The light of Epiphany 2016 leads us, as always, to be who we are called to be, do what we are able to do, and not be anxious about the rest. This new year, which began with the eighth anniversary of the Therese of Divine Peace Community on the First Sabbath of Advent, gives us pause to look back over a few highs and lows of the past year.

My ongoing involvement in the program for the formation of priests in Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP) has greatly slowed, as I officially retired from the position last January and am now working only with those women who were already into their formation with me before then.

There was a spate of weddings, even within the Therese family and within my own family – three within four weeks at one point, in fact, during May and June. And births. I happily welcomed great-grandchild #13, Brayden Michael John, born to granddaughter Brandy and her partner Donny in July.

Also ordinations, including the fourth one to be hosted by the Therese Community, at which three women were ordained deacons. And even a Bar Mitzvah, for our new friend Charlie, at which many Therese members happily celebrated.

And of course deaths. For our celebration of All Saints in November, the Therese Community remembered nearly three dozen shining lights now burning brightly in another realm. Among those was the second death within our Great Waters Region, Rev. Alta Jacko. I also lost both of my beloved dogs, Gina and Max.

And other changes. Two of our founding members, Ron and Laura, retired and relocated to the Cleveland area in November. My grandson Jason, his wife Sheila, and my greats Brendan and Mia, departed for California right after Christmas.



But still we are reminded to arise and shine. The light is ours, individually and collectively. The light is the glory of God upon us, within us, shining through us, lighting up the whole night sky as we arrive in a fiery flash of shooting star and are introduced into this earth's core as "new" birth. Or are reintroduced to ourselves as we dissect our dreams, engage our world, live with passion, take the road less traveled by...

Until we see with new eyes, or more precisely, see with the eyes of our soul – the eyes that brought us into our earthly being – we miss it. We even miss our dreams. We become dead wood, grounded wings, lost on diverging roads. Our Epiphany is the real beginning of real life. Our ongoing epiphanies keep us going, keep us growing, free us to become lights in this place that we have migrated to for this span of our human existence.

Epiphany is the real gift of Christmas. So, Merry Christmas! And may all our epiphanies be bright!

Shalom,

Elsie