

## EPIPHANY NEWSLETTER FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2015



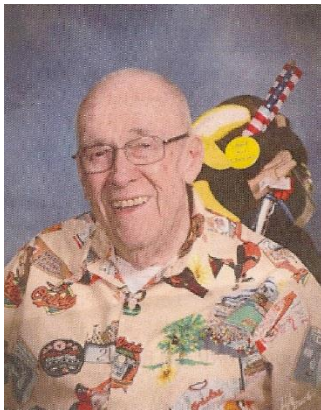
This watercolor by artist Frederick Wong (N.Y.C.) presents Mary and Joseph as tiny specks on a modest arm of barren land between water on either side. There is a village in the background but no evidence of the inn that is full and refused the tired couple, looking for shelter. As we know from scripture, Mary and Joseph lodged in a stable with the animals and it was there that the Christ child was born.

Both scripture and the painting (which belonged to my mother) offer inexhaustible riches for our Advent prayer and spiritual preparation for Christmas. A few suggestions follow but please feel free to find what speaks to you.

1. With the world in apparent convulsions and individuals and families fleeing war and terror, where are the contemporary “inns” that have no room? Are they in our hearts or cities or countries? Are they barricaded with fences and guarded by police? What is the world doing to sustain the hundreds of thousands of people moving across borders and often stuck between two countries, neither of which will admit them? What would we here at Epiphany- you and I- do about the desperate people in our midst who might be bearing the Christ to us?
2. Mary and Joseph are on a pilgrimage, as it were, to the place where their son, God’s son, will be born. What’s happening on our Advent pilgrimage? Are we consciously waiting for His birth or are we only focused on gift buying?

3. The antiphon on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent used with the Cantic of Mary reads “See the Lord coming from afar; his splendor fills the earth“. In the above painting, we see the Holy Couple coming from afar and we know of the splendor that their child’s birth will bring. Let’s pause and consider this moment in history and how we will celebrate Christ’s splendor at Christmas and thereafter.
  4. In the Holy Land, the area portrayed in the painting, Christians are often the target of vicious persecutions, if not actual assassinations. In Egypt, Coptic Christian churches have been burned down and people murdered. According to the bishops’ Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), 400,000 Coptic Christians have fled Egypt since 2011. There is a very real danger that some of the oldest Christian communities in the world, including groups where Aramaic, Jesus’ language, is still spoken will disappear due to death threats, murders, and war. Let’s remember these brothers and sisters in our Advent meditations.
  5. Whatever hospitality Mary and Joseph will experience will be from barn animals, angels, and eventually the Wise Men. What does hospitality mean to us this Advent and how can we welcome Him into our midst? Some Jews have a tradition of setting an extra place at the table for the prophet, Elijah, or for any other visitor who may appear. Hebrews 13:2 tells us “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unaware.”
  6. What other inspirations for prayer come to you?
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#### LOSS OF A GREAT FRIEND AND AN ORIGINAL “EPIPHANYITE”



After many medical issues that he faced valiantly, Ed Collins, age 97, died on Sept. 25, 2015 at Charlestown, the assisted living where he resided. Ed is survived by Sr. Kass Collins, well known to this community, and by his son, Ed Collins.

Many of the “older” Epiphany members remember Ed, his wife, Sue, and daughter, Kass from the very early years at Manresa, the Jesuit retreat house on the Severn. Once the community moved to Cape St. Clair, Ed was visible and active in his work setting up the altar for Mass and playing his bass fiddle with the folk music group. Any interaction with him was always graced with his jovial sense of humor, warmth, and willingness to help anyone anytime.

Once he and Sue moved to Charlestown, we saw less of them but kept track of both through their daughter, Sr. Kass. (His wife, Sue, predeceased him at Charlestown.) Sr. Kass had been the music minister at Epiphany and the beating heart of our community. Once she became the pastoral associate at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Edgewater, we saw her there when the church graciously allowed several Epiphany funerals to be held there.

Ed and Sue, may you sing with the angels! We miss you. Kass, we miss you too.

## Fr. Joe McCloskey, S.J.

Fr. Joe, a long time celebrant at Epiphany, continues in the Jesuit medical facility in Philadelphia, following a stroke. From Fr. Innocent we learned that he has fleeting moments of consciousness. Please pray for him in gratitude for all he gave us. May the Lord be equally good to him!

## SCHEDULE AT EPIPHANY

Sunday Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 a.m. Mass	Fr. Charles Borges, S.J.
Sunday Dec. 13 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 a.m. Mass	Fr. Dan Moore, PSS
Sunday Dec. 20 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 a.m. Mass	Fr. Okure, O.P.
Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 p.m. Mass	Fr. Okure, O.P.
	Carols start at 7:30 p.m.	
Sunday, Dec. 27 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 a.m. Mass	Fr. Bazemo, M.Afr.

## PASTORAL PATTERNS

We are reminded that the Jubilee Year of Mercy is beginning and we are all asked to reflect on God's mercy in our lives and how we can be merciful in the upcoming Jubilee Year and thereafter. To listen to the reading for any day of the year go to: [www.usccb.org/bible/readings-audio/cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings-audio/cfm) (thanks, Nancy).

## FUN AND GAMES AT EPIPHANY

Thanks to Suzanne and Rosie for initiating the first Epiphany picnic on the water and for providing the donuts! All the other good food was appreciated too as well as the music which nourished our souls! Many thanks to Laura for the following excellent photos!





#### OUTREACH TO THOSE IN NEED LOCALLY

As is our tradition, we collected over \$800 for Thanksgiving food baskets for needy families in Annapolis. This amount enabled us to serve 8 families, who in addition to the Turkey and Trimmings, received enough additional food for 6 more meals! As usual, Lynne Evans and Julie Hildebrand were the movers and shakers of this project and we assisted by others in shopping and packing the food. Another army of volunteers delivered the “baskets” to the families. Thanks to all who participated. You make us proud.



#### AND IN AFRICA

The community donated \$1000 to assist the sister of Bhati Jacques, an employee at the African Faith and Justice Network where Fr. Okure is director. Bhati’s brother-in-law was assassinated in the Congo after the gunman did a name check to make sure he was killing the right man. His daughter was present. His wife and 12 children now have no income without the husband’s salary. Bhati says this donation is a very large amount of money in the Congo and will go far to stabilize this family during this crisis. Please pray for this family; many thanks for your generosity.

The Congo has great gold and mineral resources and has been in chaos for the last 20 years as various countries and many armed groups wage warfare. Millions of people have been killed. Rita and Michael Murphy are volunteers with this group.

#### NEWSLETTER

This will be my last newsletter, at least for the foreseeable future. It can be a really fun contribution to the community and allows for some creativity! It has involved four newsletters a year, usually to coincide with the four liturgical seasons. Often members and priests contribute articles, etc. Please consider taking up this project. I’d be happy to talk with anyone who is interested about what’s involved.

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#### Prayer

Enlarge the place of your tent,  
and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out:  
hold not back, lengthen your cords  
and strengthen your stakes.

Isaiah 54: 2

Have a wonderful Advent filled with anticipation of Christ’s coming and many Christmas blessings!

Jane Lytle-Vieira