

**"And they will call Him Immanuel - which means, God with us" Matt 1:23**  
**"You see Him here in this place; never forget it, it is through Him that you are living and nobody else" Dr. Oswald Hoffman**  
**"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.**  
**The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us." John 1:1-14**

Epiphany ("appearance" or "manifestation") is a Christian feast intended to celebrate the "shining forth or revelation of God to mankind".

A little girl was once asked by her mother what a Saint is. Remembering the Bible stories of people she had seen portrayed in her church's stained glass window she replied, "They are those who the light is shining through". A simple but true explanation of who and what saints are and do. Each Christian is a saint, not because of the work that they do, but because of the work that God has done for and through them. His light was first lit in us through the Holy Spirit in the water and Word of our Baptism (John 3:5, Titus 3:5). His activity within us, even though we are still sinners, declares us to be member of His kingdom of light (1 Corinthians 12:3). Now that we are "Christened" (Christ in us) we are enabled and placed by God in this world to shine like Christ in the darkness (Philippians 2:15). We don't often feel or even think of ourselves as being saints because the title is often associated with people who are dead and have done some extraordinary work in their lives, like those who are often memorialized in the stained glass windows of our churches.

Thanks be to God that our Sainthood is not associated with these things. Instead, we read in Scripture the phrase, "in Christ" (John 15:1-5, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 John 4:4, etc.). It is a phrase we need to get absolutely straight. It is not a matter of self anything (self-help, discipline, or enlightenment, etc.). It is not about putting Jesus first in our lives, tapping into the power of the Spirit, or even making a decision for Christ. We cannot of our own power, will, or strength do these things. Rather as 1 Corinthians 1:30 states: "It is because of Him (God) that you are in Christ Jesus". God has simply made us, through His Holy Spirit by Word and Sacrament who we are, in Christ. Search yourselves and you will see this truth. You know as a Christian when you do wrong. You know it because the Word lives in you as a constant companion. You know that feeling of guilt you have when you neglect going to church and then see the Pastor the following day? Why? Because Christ is in you. (P.S. It is when you do not feel the effects of the law that you are in danger, in fact dead.) Because when Christ is in us we want to do what is right. It is our new nature. It is therefore imperative that we regularly receive His means of grace (Word and Sacrament) so that we may be strengthened with the living Christ in us.

Christians also know that God has not left us to be defenders. More than sustaining us through His Word and Sacrament, He also places into our hands the powerful sword of His Word through which the dark forces of evil are annihilated. Through this living and active Word we saints are equipped to be more than conquerors (Romans 8:37) against which not even the gates of hell can stand (Matthew 16:18). This is why we seek to be fed with the Word in worship and Bible study and even sneak in between snacks of devotion and prayer. Furthermore, when we proclaim and live this Word, God promises that it will not be spoken in vain but it will accomplish that which He sent it to do.

God knows that in many big and small ways we can shine Christ's Light in a world of darkness. As we participate in God's epiphany it is comforting to know that God sees each struggling saint/sinner not where we are presently in weakness, but where, what and who we are through

His Son. He is the One who has overcome darkness with His wonderful light that brightens our path on our way home (2 Timothy 4:18, Rev. 22:4-5). We no longer should hide in shame or fear but go out and conquer making disciples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds (saintliness), and praise your Father in Heaven: (Matt. 5:16).

In Our Savior Jesus Christ

Robert Auger DCE