

*January 3, Feast of the Epiphany*

*Is 60:1-6 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12*

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***“A LIGHT HAS SHONE!”***

Richard has been imprisoned his entire adult life without parole. About fifteen years ago, he was inspired to develop and organize “Criminals and Gangs Anonymous” (CGA), a 12-step program to help other prisoners face their issues, admit to their failings, seek pardon, and establish a firm spiritual foundation to replace their violence. This remarkable program has spread to other prisons and into gang-infested areas of our cities. Now, near death from cancer, he is awaiting the hope of compassionate release.

At one point, Richard spoke these incredible words: ***“I never realized a candle of hope was not intended to overpower the darkness but rather be a sign that the darkness would not overpower me.”*** This beautiful feast of Epiphany reminds me of how, like the Wise Men, Richard looked to the Light to lead him out of darkness into a new kind of freedom. From it, he extended it beyond himself to others.

In her “amazing” book **Radical Amazement**, Judy Cannato compares the miracle of photosynthesis in its transference of light and energy to the coming of Christ on our planet: ***“In Jesus, the Holy One activated an emergent potentiality that broke open, flared forth, and transformed the cosmos. But the light was not to be contained or confined to Him alone.”*** Photosynthesis provides plants with the oxygen and food sources we need to stay alive. Nothing in nature is for itself alone. Therefore, in our consenting to embrace the Gospel Christ (as Richard did), in our “yes” to absorbing this Light, ***“we, too, . . . become light, partaking of the divine nature in concrete and tangible ways.”*** Nature with its daily feast of miracles has much to teach us about the love messages God has written there. The question: How do we continue to keep this miracle ongoing?

Jesus’ coming to earth, therefore, was not an isolated incident of sweetness and poverty, but rather an evolutionary breakthrough that continues to freely pour forth the Energy we so need to capture in our daily lives. From it we absorb what God is all about – ***“forgiveness and healing, justice and mercy.”*** Epiphany, then is an ongoing daily event that gives an entirely different slant to the concept of “coming to save us from our sins.” In the bursting forth of healing Light and Energy and with our consent to be caught up in its amazing, continuous dynamic, we are swept up into new personhood, new vision, new awe and wonder, new healing. How can we not sing and dance and play and shout and spiral right out of our gravitational chains? We can, every time we stretch ourselves just a bit further into broken places. This is why the darkness Richard speaks of never overpowered him.

So the next time a morning sun welcomes you after you emerge from a dark night, welcome it and breathe it in to remind yourself to absorb the living Energy and Light of Christ that still explodes all around you. Then, pass it on!

