



**SSpS Year of Communion with Others**

## **Epiphany**

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Today, on the Feast of the Epiphany, we open the Year of Communion with Others.

The word ‘epiphany’ comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia* which means ‘manifestation’. The feast celebrates the revelation of God through his Son, Jesus Christ, who lived as one of us (Jn. 1:1-14). The liturgy of today reminds us of a triple revelation. The first is the miracle at Cana where Jesus reveals his glory and opens up the faith of believers. The second is at the baptism in the Jordan, where the Father reveals Jesus' divine filiation through the Spirit. The third is the visit of the *wise men*, where God is revealed to the people through the child Jesus.

### **An Openness that Enriches**

The three *wise men* came originally from the East (Mt. 2:1), probably very far from the boundary of the Promised Land. Seeing the star, they began a search. They left their comfortable homes and undertook an arduous journey because they wanted to find the meaning of this special star.

Initially they were looking for a newborn king, and looking for him, naturally, in the royal palace. They have already gone on their way, but at a certain point, they became clueless. They no longer saw the star. It was the word of the Scripture that they had received which directed their search when the star no longer guided them.

They came to a religious center and encountered the fear of the people, the arrogance of the ruling leader, and the lack of interest of the religious leaders.

The priests and the scribes of the people simply gave information, but they did not move with the *wise men* (Mt 2, 3-6). Maybe this was the reason that they were unable to open their hearts and enjoy the searching of the wise men.

Mary and the Child show us another attitude. The evangelist mentioned the "house" (Mt. 2: 11), which is the symbol of the Christian community in the Gospel. Unlike the people of Bethlehem, King Herod and the scribes, Mary and the Child, as an image of a tiny community, accepted the *wise men* who came to their house and enriched them.

Like Mary and the Child, we can be enriched when we change and let go of our arrogance, fear and disinterest. We can be enriched when we accept, welcome, and receive our brothers and sisters living or working with us, our collaborators, strangers, migrants and the poor. Truly, through them we encounter Christ in our homes and in our midst. Jesus wants to be searched for, found and accepted by all. He revealed himself to all; he came for all people of the world.

If we want to be honest with ourselves, most of us would have to admit that seeing Christ in some of the people we meet in the course of a day is not easy. It is sometimes challenging. Yet, that is exactly what we are called to do and what Jesus Himself told us (Mk. 12, 31). Even if it is difficult, we have to try to see and recognize, at least, a small light of God shining in the faces of all our brothers and sisters (1 Jn. 4: 20).

### **Dialogue of Understanding**

In the story of the wise men, we see the star that symbolizes creation and speaks of God. Then came the word of Scripture, which was shared with them and showed them the continuation of the path. Finally, there was the fullness of communion with Christ as the climax.

The story of the wise men can be a very good input for our daily life. If we have the same interest and zeal as the people who live with us, our brother or sister, our collaborators, then together we try to search for ways to find and realize our plans. This collaboration can bring us closer to each other and help us in our search. Sharing of interests, searching together and realizing plans or dreams are important stages of dialogue. Dialogue is at the beginning of every human relationship and within every experience of communion.

The aim of such dialogue is to understand others in the way they want to be understood. It demands an openness and willingness to listen to them, to be ready to overcome prejudices about their religion or their culture, and to have a great desire to learn about and from them. It means to enter into a relationship that is positive and constructive. It means seeing what we have in common and how we can live together in peace. Maybe, most importantly, it means learning to collaborate and doing something good for others.

In this positive relationship, we can enrich each other. We deepen our knowledge, not only of the religion, culture and of life of our brothers and sisters, but also of our own. Only then can we share our joys and sorrows, our problems and preoccupations; and try to find a way through constructive dialogue of life and action, to build bridges of friendship and love.

### **Communion with Others**

Epiphany is a feast that opens space for meeting each other. It does not matter what color, culture or religion people are. It is through Jesus, who became a human being for all and revealed himself to all, that all people can live in union and in communion with Him and with one another.

Jesus came into this world to reveal his Father (Jn.14:9; Mt 11, 27), to give life (Jn. 10:10), and to live in communion with us. As Christians, we are called to be the manifestation of Christ in the world and to the world (Mt. 18:18-20; 28:20). Animated by his love that acts in us, we should recognize Christ present in others (Mt. 25: 31-46). We are invited to live in communion with them and to give them testimony of this love. The love of Christ in us, received through communion with him, will shine out more brightly, only when we recognize Christ shining in others.

Our mission as SSpS is to reveal Christ to our brothers and sisters, through our life, work and activities, and to help them to embrace Him already present in the world, in every human being and in every human heart.

In our daily life, we are called to make greater efforts to believe, to see and to acknowledge that it is Christ himself smiling at us through the eyes of our brothers and sisters; Christ talking to us through the mouths of our neighbors; Christ helping us through the hands of our collaborators; and Christ asking for help through the suffering of the migrants and the poor.

Recognizing this reality, we prove to the world that we understand Christ's real desire, His reason for coming among us and His message of love. By the testimony of our lives, by our simplicity and humility, we can bring people together as brothers and sisters; we can live in communion with them. Finally, we can bring them all to Jesus.