

When I began seminary not only did I have to learn new vocabulary but also new ways of thinking and saying things. What I mean by this, I remember an early theology class (remember I was a geologist) and the prof talked about a certain philosophy “in conversation” with Christianity. I thought to myself, what????????? What does he mean “in conversation with”. The point he was trying to make was that this philosophy and Christian thought could be used with each other to critique and offer deeper insights. However, it took me months to understand this.

The Core values, the Core beliefs of our Catholic - Christian faith really are few and simple, most summarized in the Creed: God loves all, and desires all of humanity to be in union. Jesus is the fully God and fully Human, the incarnated Son of God. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a union/communion of three persons, yet still one. There is a little more, but you catch the drift.

Our Catholic Wisdom is based on this love of God. Think of the Scripture from John, “God so loved the world that he sent his beloved Son to save the world.” Love defines all for us, it is the rock upon which we build our faith.

It is the Wisdom by which we reference, judge and live out other wisdoms, and make our decisions.

Often I come back to the story of Genesis, of Adam and Eve. A story in which they, despite being in a tight relationship with God, let a worldly wisdom, not God’s love, define their choice. They let a wisdom not of God to guide their actions. They upset what is supposed to be the natural order of things; that Divine Wisdom guides all other wisdom.

Here on Epiphany we see this reversed, or natural order restored. The Magi, the wise and learned, come to the infant Jesus. They come in submission, in humility, to acknowledge the Divine Wisdom.

They recognize something greater here than their own way of understanding that will enhance their wisdom;, to guide it and make it better. These men, simply because they are different are not evil, or horrible, but still in need of growth and wisdom.

Sometimes I think we view and treat the Church and our Faith like an algorithm, a computer program, or a search engine. We plug in a query and expect an answer, an answer that applies to all; an answer that is succinct and easy to follow. "Tell me what I am supposed to do" is a refrain I hear often.

This is not what our faith is about.

Our Catholic Faith is alive, it is vibrant, it is solid but flexible. It is a Wisdom based on God's love which we learn to apply as the situation needs. It informs us. It allows us to make a choice that reflects God's love, and to bring healing.

It allows us to discern between what maybe the world says to do and what we truly need to do.

We will get hurt in our lives. People, even those closest to us, will hurt us, betray us; intentionally and unintentionally. Often this world says take revenge, get back at them; sue them...you get the point. Sometimes the world is right; sometimes we need to go to court for justice...but we also need to work on forgiveness. As God has forgiven us in Christ, so we are called to forgive others, no matter the hurt. So we work on not punishing the other, not taking out aggression on the other. We work with grace to see their goodness.

We will be called upon to give of ourselves at some point; time, money, effort. God has given of God's self for us, Jesus died on the cross for us, so can't we give of ourselves for others who maybe need it?

The worldly wisdom says "Be concerned for your needs only, others can take care of themselves". And we as Catholics believe that we must be able to care for ourselves and for family, we are not asked to go destitute for others. Yet, maybe we don't always need that luxury item, that expensive holiday abroad, that new car... and we could use those resources to assist.

The Ability to choose is a virtue, especially in our country. We think we have the right to choose whatever we want; but Wisdom also says we can't

choose what is harmful for others; what is truly a wrong. We must always choose what is good and avoid what is wrong.

We make choices all the time; sometimes monumental ones, others not so much. As Catholics, we need to ensure that it is the Divine Wisdom of God, through Christ, that guides/informs our choices.

Epiphany celebrates God's divine light for all the world, a way to live in this world that heals, that builds bridges, that offers compassion, kindness and generosity.

Epiphany calls us to remember who and what is supposed to have priority in our lives; not our politics nor politicians; not our investment funds or bank accounts; not our community standings, nor whatever sports we watch or play...none of these are bad, but they take a second seat to God. They need to give homage to God, as we need to as well.

The Eucharist reminds us that it is God's love that will ultimately bring us to the fullness of life, here and eternally.