



# Epiphany Star



February 2017

**Articles for the Star are due by the 15th of each month.** You may place articles into the folder on the office door or e-mail them to: newsletter@epiphanystar.net

Editor: Linda Dean

## STAFF

**THE REV. BETH W. HIXON, RECTOR**  
**PAUL EXLEY, PARISH ADMINISTRATOR**  
**DODI HACKL-KEARNS, MUSIC**  
**ROBIN SMITH, ORGANIST**

## EPIPHANY VESTRY

<b>Paul Atlee</b>	<i>Rector's Warden</i>
<b>Marie Kearns</b>	<i>Acctg. Warden</i>
<b>Kathy Cobbs</b>	<i>Secretary</i>
<b>Bill Wilson</b>	<i>Property</i>
<b>Ben Millet</b>	<i>Parish Life</i>
<b>Sherri Quinlan</b>	<i>Affiliates/ Community Groups</i>
<b>Julie Datillo</b>	<i>Stewardship</i>

*Reading Holy Scripture is a challenging enterprise. Since we are participating in the Bishop's Bible Challenge this year, I hope offering various perspectives about this activity will be helpful to all who are regularly reading sacred texts.*

## Interpreting Scripture

A reflection offered by Richard Rohr

*Hermeneutics* is the technical word for a method of interpreting sacred texts. If someone does not have a consistent and declared hermeneutic, their understanding of scripture is whimsical and subjective. A good and solid biblical teacher must come clean about their manner of interpretation early on, or you have no foundation for trusting what they say. Just saying "It is scripture," as most do, is largely meaningless, because anyone can find a workable "proof text" for whatever they want to believe somewhere in the Bible. This is why many have so little trust in Christians these days.

We will move forward on our "tricycle of faith" only with three good wheels: Tradition, Scripture, and Experience. (This week we will discuss Scripture; the following two weeks we will explore Tradition and Experience.) If we leave off any of these three wheels, our interpretations of Scripture and reality will be unstable and biased according to our egoic need of the moment.

Christians who say "only Scripture" end up being unconsciously dishonest and inconsistent, because they are relying on their own "tradition" of interpreting those Scriptures (without acknowledging it). Even more importantly, we must recognize that we cannot *not* rely upon our own experience. There is no such thing as a completely unbiased opinion! Since we all use tradition and experience anyway, why not admit it and thereby hold ourselves accountable?

Let's all start being honest, or we end of saying, in effect: "We have a tradition of *not* believing in tradition!" Catholics loved to say we relied upon the Great Tradition, but this usually meant "the way we have done it the last 100 years here in Italy (or England or Germany, etc.)." What we consider "sin" changes every century or so. Most of our operative images of God come primarily from our early experiences of authority in family and culture. Then we find the Scriptures to validate them!

If we try to use "only Scripture" as our methodology, we will get stuck early on, because many passages give very conflicting and even opposite images of God. I believe that Jesus only quoted those Scriptures that he could validate by his *own* experience. At the same time, if we humans trust only our *own* experiences, we will be trapped in subjective moods and personal preferences. But if we can verify that at least some holy people and orthodox teachers (Tradition), and some solid Scripture also validates our own experiences, we can be more confident that we are in *the force field of the Holy Spirit* and participating in God's sacred work in this world. This is how we *know* inside "the communion of saints," as the Apostles' Creed calls it.

Jesus and Paul clearly use and build on their own Jewish Scriptures and Tradition, yet *they both courageously interpret them through the lens of their own unique personal experience of God*. This is undeniable! We would do well to follow their examples.

continued on next page.....

*Beth's article continued from first page....*

I've often said the Bible is the best book in the world and the worst book in the world. It is the worst when it is used for bullying and self-justification; it is the best when it is used for the healing of the world and for transformation of self. Obviously, God intended the latter.

My methodology and hermeneutic is almost too simple: *I will try to read Scripture and Tradition the way that Jesus did.* This is precisely what Christians should mean when we speak of understanding the Hebrew Scriptures "in the light of Christ." This is not "supersessionism" (the belief that Christianity supersedes Judaism); it is just healthy developmental thinking. In this way, there is no such thing as an "Old Testament" because now it can always be fresh and timely! If Jesus (who of course was Jewish) is our interpretive key, it demands that we take Jewish texts and history more seriously than ever before, which will allow us to appreciate the actual context and culture inside of which Jesus taught, but also to recognize the trajectory that they—and the Christian Scriptures—create forward!

To take the Scriptures seriously is not to take them literally. Literalism is invariably *the lowest and least level of meaning*. Most biblical authors understand this, which is why they were free to take so many liberties with what Westerners would call "facts." In many ways, we have moved backward in our ability to read spiritual and transformative texts. I am afraid we have for too long used the Bible merely to prove various church positions, which narrows its range and depth. Instead of transforming people, the Bible has become merely utilitarian and handy ammunition against others.

Serious reading of Scripture will allow you to find an every new spiritual meaning for the liberation of history and your own soul. You discover that the text holds truth on many levels, instead of trying to prove it is true on mere factual or historical levels. Sacred texts will always maximize your possibilities for life, love, and inclusion, which is precisely why we call them sacred.

In God's hope alive in US...  
Beth+

## **"SOUPER BOWL" Coffee Hour!!**

We will again hold our annual "Souper Bowl" Coffee Hour on Super Bowl Sunday, February 5th, 2017, following the 10:00 service. All are invited to attend this time of fun and fellowship!

There are several ways we can use your help. With your help, we will serve soup and bread as well as a light dessert, as the fare of the day, instead of the usual coffee hour fare. We ask anyone who wishes to contribute a pot of soup or one of the other items mentioned, to please sign up on the sheet provided in the undercroft.

We also ask EVERYONE to bring a can or more of canned soup to be donated to Project Outreach. Some of the cans will serve as our centerpieces for the tables!!

Everyone will be invited to dress in their team clothes, even if their team is not playing. (I'd like to say, "Go, Eagles!" but it would be a dream!) After a bit of soup and great fellowship, everyone can be off to their own Super Bowl event!

We are looking forward to a fun time, as it was last year! Any questions, please see Betsy Dell.

## SCRIP:

SCRIP: Epiphany earned almost \$2300 from the sale of scrip! Once again, thank you to all who participated. Using gift cards is an easy way to help the church as you spend the money that you would normally spend on household expenses.

A tentative list of scrip order dates is as follows: February 12, February 26, March 12, March 26, April 9, April 23, and May 7.

Help is needed in the sale of cards after the Sunday service, and in the collection of orders on order days. If you are interested in being of assistance, or if you have any questions about the program, please speak to Susan Garone (610-415-9233 or [proutygarone@verizon.net](mailto:proutygarone@verizon.net) ).



## ARE YOU RECEIVING EMAILS FROM EPIPHANY?

The new Web Site is up and running. Please check it out: [www.epiphanystar.net](http://www.epiphanystar.net). All our email addresses are still the same. The one change you will see and have seen is how are emails blasts are distributed. We had to move to a new service for sending the emails and that is MailChimp. If you have not received an email from "Church of the Epiphany" yet, do check your spam or other folders. If you have any questions or suggestions about the new site please see Paul Exley or send an email to [churchoffice@epiphanystar.net](mailto:churchoffice@epiphanystar.net).



## THANK YOU

Helen Warner reports that Seaman's Church Institute executive director, Helene Pierson, sent a letter of gratitude on behalf of the seafarers. Her letter concluded with "Your support helps us bring the face of Christ to the seafarers and is a strong witness to the power of the Gospel."

## CELEBRATE!

## Happy Birthday

## February

6 - Beth Hixon  
 9 - Zachary Hayes  
 11- Katherine Lind  
 14 - Susan Dahl  
 21 - Sara Smokowicz  
 27 - Vincent Garone



## February

None

## Volunteer Schedules

## Eucharistic Ministers

**8:00 a.m.**                      **10:00 a.m.**

05 - Volunteer	Marti Wilson
12 - Bill Hummer	Marie Kearns
19 - Volunteer	Paul Exley
26 - Paul Atlee	Bill Hummer

## Greeters

05—Linda Dean  
 12— Betsy Dell  
 19— Larry Way  
 26 – Kitty DiBattista

## Lectors

05 - 8:00 am	Marsha Hill
10:00 am	Kitty DiBattista, Kathy Cobbs
12 - 8:00 am	Ed Hill
10:00 am	Joanne Arnold, Paul Atlee
19 - 8:00 am	Marsha Hill
10:00 am	Kathy Cobbs, Jack Cobbs
26 - 8:00 am	Ed Hill
10:00 am	Larry Way, Helen Warner

## Counters

05—Bailey/Borst  
 12 - Garone  
 19 - Wilson  
 26 - Dell/Volunteer



## Crucifer/Server

05—Bill Hummer  
 12— Marie Kearns  
 19— Paul Exley  
 26 – Mari Kearns

## Ushers

Ben Millet/Chris Schmitt

## Why Go To Church?

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

When you are DOWN to nothing..... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!

**"When Satan is knocking at your door, simply say, "Jesus, could you get that for me?"**