

Homily – The Light of Christ

Rob Keim

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Today, a day early, we are celebrating the baby Jesus as he was revealed to the three wise ones who came from the east. Tradition has it that two thousand years ago, these magi saw a star, a very bright light, in the heavens, and they followed that star until they came to Jesus. And, with the light of that star shining on the baby, the wise ones realized there was something very special about Jesus. And, they gave him gifts.

Now, today I want to focus on a small, but significant, part of the Epiphany story we heard read a moment ago. I want to focus on the star, or the light in the heavens that revealed Jesus to the wise ones.

Some speculate that the light in the heavens was a lining up of planets or even a comet. How many of you remember back in 1997 when the Hale-Bopp comet was very bright in the sky. For several weeks we had quite the show. Maybe a comet is what revealed Jesus to the magi. Or, others wonder if a distant star had gone super nova and this was the bright light in the sky.

Today, astronomers wonder if the star Betelgeuse is going to go supernova soon. You can see this star in the left shoulder of the constellation Orion. This star is giving off waves and other indicators that it may be getting ready to go supernova. Betelgeuse is 430 light years away, so if it is about to go supernova it actually already did 430 years ago, and the light waves are just now getting to us. If this happens, then some wonder how large and bright it will actually appear in our sky. Might we even see this supernova during daylight? Be that as is may, anyone alive on Earth when it happens will be treated to an amazingly beautiful sight in the night sky – a very, very, very bright star.

I think of the bright light in the sky above the baby Jesus as an historic fact, just like I think of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as something

that happened in history. So, I wonder what caused that bright light two thousand years ago?

Now, we can also focus on the meaning of the light. And, once again, I use the foundational concepts of the Universal Christ to look at the meaning of the bright light in the sky.

Before the beginning of time the first emanation from God was the Christ, the perfect union of spirit and matter. And, the Christ, this perfect union is throughout all of time and space. The distant galaxies, our Sun, the deepest part of the oceans, all the critters in the jungles of the Amazon, and all people have Christ in and around them. All of creation is imbued with the Christ, this perfect union of spirit and matter.

Again, before the beginning of time, Christ was the first emanation from God.

Now, according to our Old Testament book of Genesis, in the beginning the first act of God was to create light and declare it good.

And, curiously, as a confirming fact, scientists have found evidence that light burst forth at the moment of the Big Bang. This makes me wonder about the relationship between Christ and light.

If Christ, the perfect union of spirit and matter is part of everything, then it is certainly part of light.

And this would mean that it was the Christ that burst forth with the Big Bang. And, it would mean it is the Christ in the night sky that was revealing the Christ that was the baby Jesus.

Now, from a functional or practical standpoint, light is not what you see. Light is the means by which you see everything else.

Like light, God is not what you see. God is the means by which you see everything else.

And, with light, with the Christ, with God, we can see that Christ is part of everything and everyone around us. This should have profound implications on the way we live our lives. For when we see Christ in and around all, then we live into the life of love that is our birthright. God made us for love. The light of Christ is also the love of Christ.

Now, here at St. Barnabas we want to be a community of love that arms us each with the skills of love. These skills include:

“common courtesies,
gratitude,
admitting weaknesses and failures,
self-awareness of our own emotions and attitudes,
expressing hurt or disappointment,
forgiving and even reconciling when possible,
asking for help,
differing graciously,
surfacing and negotiating competing desires,
taking the first step to resolve conflicts,
upholding wise boundaries,
saying yes and no,
winning and losing graciously,
creating win-win outcomes,
speaking truth in love,
speaking truth to power,
asking good questions,
requesting feedback,
expressing affection,
opening one’s heart,
giving gifts, and
seeking wise counsel.”

I can assure you that if we become proficient in this long list of love skills then we will be a light that shines out from this hill here in Arroyo Grande. We will not be invisible. We will be noticed as the hands and feet and voice of Christ in the South County. People will notice the light of Jesus

that is in us, and they will say “how can I be like them? How can I also be a follower of Jesus?”

Today we celebrate the revealing of Jesus by the bright star in the sky. Whether it was a comet or a supernova, it was the Christ being revealed and doing the revealing. We also celebrate how Christ continues to be revealed to us throughout the universe and in each other. We celebrate and commit to a life that reflects the light and love of Christ back out into the world.

Look at the people around you and see the light of Christ shining back.