

TUESDAY – February 17th

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: Bathe me in the light...of the glory of Christ.

Glorious Christ, I come to day to be bathed in your light once more. May your light continue to guide and keep me throughout this day. May I be a reflection of that light to those who have been blinded to it by the world and its false light. In your radiant name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

KEY VERSES: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:

(3) “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (NRSV).

Epiphany is a season of light. The light of the Word illuminates the various discoveries along the journey. We began the season in the light of the star which led the Magi to the Christ Child. We finish the season in the glorious light of a transformed (or transfigured before his disciples) Christ prior to his final journey to the cross. Bathed in the light of Christ, we become more than we were, transformed by the light into an open revelation and reflection of the glory of Christ for those around us. As our scripture passage today reminds us, “*the god of this world [however you term him] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*” As we continue to model the light of Christ in our own lives, the eyes of those blinded by the world may be opened to the good news of the Christ.

When I was in college, my roommate for two years was a blind girl named Becky. Becky had been born blind and was the first blind person ever admitted to Stetson University, our Alma Mater. Because of her good example, three other blind students were accepted to the school while we were there. Two of these were girls and we became good friends with each. We spent time with them in various activities. One day, one of the girls, named Helen, came to visit us. She told us that she had not wanted to become a Christian because she had seen so much hypocrisy among Christians that she did not want to be a part of them. She said that we had shown her what it was like to be a true Christian and she was ready to become one herself. We had allowed Christ’s light to shine through us and Helen saw it. She was not healed of her physical blindness, but she was healed of her spiritual blindness because we lived out the belief we had professed. Helen was a serious asthmatic and died young from it. We know that she awaits us among the faithful because we were there to lead her to the Christ, not with a lot of rhetoric, but with our lives. This is a wondrous thing for me. It is also a humbling experience because I so often fail to lead the life I believe Christ would have me to live. I wonder if there have been others who have seen my failings and were blinded to the Christ because I did not live up to the expectations of a Christian in their sight. I can only cling to the remembrance of Helen and hope that I can continue to fulfill my calling as a follower of Christ.

In Matthew 5:14-16 Christ tells us that we are the light of the world. He tells us not to hide the light but to let it shine before others so that they will see our good works and praise, not us, but the Father. This is in contrast to Matthew 6:1-4 where we are admonished not to trumpet our acts of righteousness before men so that we will receive praise for them. If we parade our good works before other so that we might reap rewards for them we are not

reflecting Christ's light, but seeking our own rewards. The difference is not in what we do, but how and why we do it. When we are reflecting Christ's light (and compassionate love) we do so naturally, not so that others will notice. We do so humbly, without undue attention to ourselves. I am prompted to compare ABC's show Extreme Makeover Home Edition with Habitat for Humanity. On the TV show (which I truly enjoy and applaud) a needy family is given a new home, vastly superior to the one they had so that they may put their lives back together and not have to worry about their home anymore. They choose families who have had devastating illness, fires, floods or other natural disasters and who have given unselfishly to their communities. We watch on television as the family is overwhelmed by the generosity of those who work to accomplish this and opulence of the house itself. The reward for ABC and the design team is given through the publicity of national and even global television where millions of persons see and applaud the gift. They have their reward here and now. Habitat for Humanity doesn't get the house done in 7 days. They don't build something opulent, full of elegant furniture and bedrooms designed for one person's interests. But, they give unstintingly of their time and skills, unsung before the world, making the dream of owning a home a reality for thousands around the country. The first example looks for praise from humanity. The second looks for people's lives to be better. I love Extreme Makeover Home Edition, but I wonder how many more people they could help if they used the money less extravagantly so that they could help more people instead of just a few. At least they are helping some and that's no bad thing. Yet, I would rather give to Habitat for Humanity quietly and let God receive the praise.

Shine the light of Christ before the world so that God receives the praise and let your compassionate love lead the way. It's an awesome joy.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 6:1-4

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. When have I seen Christ's light in others? Did it help me to believe in Christ?
2. How do I let Christ's light shine through me?
3. What deeds do I want to receive praise for? How can I move past that so that God receives the praise?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

1. If your community has a Habitat for Humanity group, see how you can help, either with your skills or your support.
2. Pray for the agencies both within your church affiliations and your community which help those in need. Find a place to serve in one of them.

Light of the World, I would find a place to serve without calling attention to myself so that you receive the praise and the glory. Though I recognize the need to work together with others to achieve our goals, help us to do the work to bring you the glory and honor and not ourselves. Help us to seek ways to serve one another which will be honorable to you and not puff up our own vanity. Help me to find the balance between letting your light shine through me before humanity and parading my deeds before others for my own glory. May I serve today in a meaningful and humble way. In your radiant name, I pray. Amen.