

Good morning, I hope that this Epiphany message will enlighten and brighten your soul. To have an epiphany is to have a revealing, illuminating discovery or realization. The Magi, the three wise men's revealing discovery was found after their long and arduous journey to Bethlehem

Not too long ago, a family from Alabama, decided to search through their great-grandfather's things, a many of years after his death. They came across a crumbled paper bag, and one of the grandchildren decided to look through it. What she discovered in the bag shocked them all, seven Ty Cobb baseball cards printed over a hundred years ago and each card is valued at over \$250,000. The great grandfather had no idea that he left a fortune to his family. This one family members curiosity led her to search and discovered a treasure which changed their lives.

I like watching TV shows about people who are searching for something or someone. In my younger days, I watched a program called Star Trek, whose mission was to search for new worlds, to discover new civilizations and to boldly go where no one has gone before. This Syfy show was followed by another program called Star Gate. Star Gate was a similar show about explorers who travel through a gate and whose mission was to discover new life. Its team is made up of three explorers: A Colonel who is courageous, a Major who is creative and a Geologist who was curious. What kept my interests about Star Gate was to see how the team used these important qualities to accomplish their mission.

On this feast of the Epiphany, we read how the Magi go where they have never gone before, they travel to an unknown land, in search for the new born king. They too risk takers who had the courage to leave their country, their customs, and the security of their homes to make the journey. By traveling from the East, they had the courage to cross many challenging barriers and it was their creativity and curiosity which led them to follow a star, believing that it would lead them to find someone whom they could worship.

They call the Magi, three wise men, because unlike most men, they had the wisdom to ask for direction and to be willing to change course in order to accomplish their mission.

Herod, on the other hand, did not find Christ because he did not have the courage to even make the journey to Bethlehem, instead he instructs the Magi, "You go and search diligently for the child." What Herod didn't realize is that when it comes to finding Christ, we must search for ourselves, we can't send someone else. Herod was preoccupied with power, possessions and prestige, he had no interest in looking for anything or anyone beyond himself.

When I was twenty-seven years old, I assumed my search for God was complete, until someone came along who and encouraged me to be a God Explorer. At the time I was content with my life and in many ways felt settled. I was happy with my job at the Tax Department in Albany, I had good friends, a nice apartment, I was excited about preparing to run my first marathon. I happily went to Mass every Sunday and enjoyed teaching religion to 8<sup>th</sup> graders. If someone were to have asked me about my relationship with God, I would have honestly replied that it couldn't get much better.

However, I met a young Priest by the name of Fr. Michael Malone. I was struck by his deep faith, his joy in celebrating the Mass and his kindness for people. I wanted to know more about what made him so dedicated. Once I got to know Fr. Malone, the more I realized that he was persistently looking for ways to grow in his personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He told me, "Marty, our search for Christ is never ending, there's always more to learn and room to grow." This young Priest inspired me to begin a new spiritual search which led to my vocation.

The grandchildren who searched through their great grandfather's stuff led to a treasure which changed their lives. The wise men's journey to Bethlehem led them to discover the Christ child.

What about your search? Do you believe there is more to discover? My friends, it's never too late to explore God's tender love and kind mercy.

This week, make your new year resolution by listing three things or ways which will help you deepen your faith in God.

Let us pray: please pray after me: "Lord Jesus, thank you for the blessings of a new year, give me courage to seek you, give me the creativity to imagine that you are calling me by name and the curiosity to explore new ways of following you. Amen and Amen.

May God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may God look kindly on you and give you peace. May Mary our loving Mother hold you in her tender arms. Have a blessed and safe week.