

Many Feasts, One Meaning.

Over the past couple weeks I've noted how the different symbols we use in our prayer, be it the art work in the church, the materials and design of the Advent Wreath, or the very seasons of the years, all point to the grace of God in Christ at work in our lives. The same is true of the different gospel readings proclaimed in these weeks of the Christmas season. We commonly think of the Christmas gospel as the story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. But it is actually more broadly about the revelation or manifestation of the light of God in our world in Jesus of Nazareth, the unique bearer of the Christ-Light. The Christmas Midnight Mass gospel says *The angel appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, Christ.* The gospel for Christmas morning said *the Word became flesh and we saw his glory as the Father's only Son... The true light coming into the world.* On the Feast of the Holy Family the deeper identity of twelve year old Jesus was shown when Mary and Joseph *found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding.* Even foreigners saw and recognized the glory of God in the Magi who say *We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.* In next week's gospel for the feast of the Baptism of the Lord we will hear how *heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son.* And even after the Christmas season itself, the Sunday after next we will hear of Jesus' first miracle during his adult ministry: *Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory.* The common theme in these diverse gospels is how the light of God is made known in Jesus, this being heart of the Christmas message, and indeed the whole Gospel message.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.

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