

Homily for January 2, 2000  
Feast of the Epiphany Cycle B

By Father Charles Bowes

Isaiah 60:1-6  
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6  
Matthew 2:1-12

## *God takes away even our fear to follow.*

The other day I couldn't help but smile at two young parents caring for their newborn. They had two other small children as well – each with a very decided mind of its own. “You folks sure do manage things well,” I said. Turning to me with a bright smile and a knowing look, the husband said, “Yeah, it comes with the territory called parenthood – God gives the strength.”

Isn't that the case with all we do? “God gives the strength.” I'm sure that a few years earlier, that same young man could very easily have been overwhelmed by the prospect of such responsibilities. But along come those responsibilities – and with them comes the strength...God-given. That's what we're about in our spiritual lives: to be open – just a little...and God gives the strength – to do whatever.

I wonder if fear of what God might do with us keeps some of us from making our parish retreat. That retreat begins on a weekday evening, Wednesday, January 19, and continues each Wednesday for some weeks. People may imagine that if they make the

retreat, suddenly they're going to start visiting homes and doing all kinds of things they can in no way envision themselves doing at present. That is just not the case. God asks us to do only what God gives us the strength to do, and the retreat is simply a way in which we allow the child within us to be born. After all, on this feast of the Epiphany, the child we visit is not just the Jesus of long ago, but is the new man or woman God is calling us to become.

No need to fear that call – for with it comes, like the young father knew so well, the strength to do what needs to be done – whatever that might be.

With us at each Mass this weekend is a parishioner who has offered to say something about the retreat recently made and how it impacted their lives to discover what God wishes for them and the strength they've found.

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fear to follow.