

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



Catholic Community

Member of the English-Speaking Mission

Mass: Fridays at 6 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Sundays at 10 a.m. in the main Sanctuary

Interfaith Community Center • Hüttenweg 46 • 14195 Berlin-Dahlem

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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10-12

January 15th, 2017 - Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (Missal p 58 et seq.): **Isa 49:3, 5-6 • Ps 40:2, 4, 7-10 • 1 Cor 1:1-3 • Jn 1:29-34**

Welcome to our 10 am Mass at All Saints. Our Celebrant today is Fr Wolfgang Schonecke

Lector: Howard Eyth • Eucharistic Ministers: Jennifer Evans, Beate Hausmann, Johannes Ploog •

Greeter: Buck Chisolm • Altar Servers: NN • Hospitality: Karen Castellon •

Designated collection: Family Sunday

Epiphany 2017: God works through men and women of all religions

We find the story of the magi only in Matthew. Mark, Luke and John write their gospels for Christians who had **not** been in the Jewish religion before, for the so-called Gentiles. Also, Paul in his letters writes for these Christians coming from the Gentiles. Only **Matthew** writes for Christians who had been in the Jewish religion before. And to them the story of the three magi must have been like a sledgehammer. Why?

When we face things and person who are beyond us, then we naturally try to restrict these things and persons so that we can handle them. We put a safety frame around them. We put them into patterns of behavior with which we are comfortable. God's relationship with us certainly falls into that restricted category – it is difficult for us to handle this relationship. Many Christians, for instance, believe God works only through and on behalf of Christians. And I presume many Muslims and Hindus fall into the same trap – for Muslim God only works through Muslims, for Hindus God only works through Hindus. There's no doubt many Jews at the time of Matthew were also guilty of restricting God's actions to their specific religion. For Jews God only works through Jews. This was certainly also true for some Jews who had committed themselves to imitating Jesus.

Let us go back to the reading from the prophet **Isaiah**. He is one of the classic Jewish prophets who tried to expand the vision of the Chosen People to include **non-Jews** in Yahweh's plan of salvation: "*Nations and kings will come to the light of your dawning day*" (Is 60,3). In other words, "*If you live your Jewish faith correctly, even non-Jews will be compelled by your example to give themselves over to Yahweh.*" Not only that. When Isaiah wrote this, Jerusalem and its temple are nothing but a pile of rubble. And nevertheless, the prophet believes those enlightened Gentiles will provide the means to be a mighty nation for Israel. "*Treasures from across the sea and the wealth of nations will be brought to you*" (Is 60,5-6). Yet, the presupposition is, such Yahweh-oriented Gentiles will eventually convert to Judaism.

So, when in the Old Testament the non-Jewish Gentiles were supposed to convert to Judaism, does this mean that the non-Jewish followers of Jesus also were supposed to convert to Judaism first? Indeed: At first, non-Jews who were interested in Christ were expected to convert to Judaism before they could imitate the risen Jesus. Only after the men were circumcised and both men and women committed themselves to keeping the 613 Mosaic laws could they become Christians. But in the running of the decades, it became clear that this was not how the Holy Spirit was guiding them.

In the case of Gentiles who wanted to follow Jesus the Holy Spirit did not demand of them to become members of the Jewish religion first. Eventually a different point of view won the day. Paul and Matthew and many other members of the Christian community argued that Gentiles, as Gentiles, could be followers of Jesus. **Paul** in today's reading to the community in **Ephesus** states: "*Because of Christ Jesus, the good news has given the Gentiles a share in the promises that God gave to the Jews. God has also let the Gentiles be part of the same body.*" (Eph 3,5) So: One no longer must be a Jew in order to be a Christian.

And that's where Matthew's **magi** come in. They are uncircumcised, pagan, Gentile astrologers who travel many, many, miles to discover "the newborn king of the Jews." The Magi travel many miles, while Herod and his Jewish Scripture knowledgeable court refuse to go the relative short distance between Jerusalem and Bethlehem to find the child. Not only that, the magi reach their destination by following a star: a practice forbidden to Jews under pain of death! **Matthew's** message is clear: God works through people and means which some in his community would restrict God from working. Those who correctly follow Jesus must constantly go beyond such limits in order to discover God working in their everyday lives. Cf <http://www.dignityusa.org/breath/january-8-2012-epiphany>

Fr Wolfgang Felber, SJ



ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME! *Visiting for the first time?* Please introduce yourself and tell us where you are from at the end of Mass, so we can welcome you. Please join us for coffee and cake in the Community Hall!

Attendance on Jan 8th: 138

Collection: All Saints: €179,24, African Catechists: €15,72

LIFT – Living in Faith Together



On Saturday, January 21st from 6.30 pm to 9 pm, we will be hosting a dinner with

female Afghani refugees. This event is in cooperation with Refugio Sharehouse and the Girl Scouts.

We will share a traditional Afghani meal over music and conversation. There will be a Question and Answer about life as a refugee in Germany following the meal. We will collect €5 per youth and €8 per adult to cover the costs for the meal and to make a donation to assist the refugee women. RSVP by January 18 to vhansen980@hotmail.com.

LIFT – Living in Faith Together



On Saturday, February 18th we will have a special LIFT around the theme of Africa Today. We will

explore life and culture in several countries of modern Africa and perhaps even get a sample of some local food specialties.

More details coming soon so watch the bulletin or visit: www.all-saints-berlin.de/home.shtml.



Confirmation Class 2017 - 2018

Our next Confirmation program will kick off starting in February 2017, leading to Confirmation in the late spring of 2018. The format for this year's program will be based on a small-group model that is relevant to young people's lives, builds strong relationships and empowers parents to support their child's spiritual growth more effectively. Interested parents should contact Jenny Gebhardt at the following email address: jgebhar@yahoo.de or Maggie Repp at the Office of the English-speaking Mission (alsda46@aol.com).



January is Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

"All around us we see wars, the exploitation of children, torture, trafficking in arms, trafficking in persons... In all these realities, in these the least of our brothers and sisters who are enduring these difficult situations, there is Jesus." – Pope Francis

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops is marking the week of January 8 – 14 as National Migration Week 2017 with the theme "Creating a Culture of Encounter." This theme reflects Pope Francis' focus on the importance of encounter in the Christian faith: "For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others."

Welcoming immigrants is part of the Catholic Social Teaching and reflects the Biblical tradition to welcome the stranger. How are you practicing this in your own life? Resources are available at: www.usccb.org

Mark your calendars:

- January 20th - **Friday Mass - in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel** at 1800.
- January 21st – **All Saints Youth Event / LIFT** – 1830 to 2100 in the Fellowship Hall.
- January 22nd – **Confirmation Class Kickoff meeting** after Mass in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel 1115 – 1200.
- February 5th – **Children's Liturgy of the Word** during Mass.
- February 5th – **High School Youth Group** – meets after Mass at 11:15 h in the Classroom.
- February 18th – **All Saints Youth Event / LIFT** – 1800 to 2100 in the Fellowship Hall.

January 22nd, 2017, 10 am Mass: Celebrant: Fr Wolfgang Felber

Lector: Jennifer Evans • Eucharistic Ministers: Beate Hausmann, Johannes Ploog, Thomas Schmidt • Greeter: Buck Chisolm • Altar Servers: Luc, Carl & Noemi Dethlefsen • Hospitality: Alicia Ching • Designated collection: All Saints

Designated collections are for special purposes in the Archdiocese of Berlin and are transferred in full. **However, in agreement with the Archdiocese, All Saints receives no financial support, so we are completely dependent upon your donations.** Please continue to donate to All Saints by using the **WHITE ENVELOPES** stamped "ALL SAINTS FUND" and/or transferring your donation to the Pax-Bank account written below. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!** • *Friends of All Saints e.V.*, IBAN: DE15 3706 0193 6001 6690 18, BIC: GENODE1PAX