

“Oh God the Strength of all who put their trust in you.”
Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Strength is an appropriate word to use to describe the God made manifest in the season of Epiphany. Notice that the word here isn't power, but strength. Epiphany, after all, is about coming to see God in surprising places, shown to us in surprising ways, calling us to surprising vocations. The God revealed in Epiphany is a divinity characterized by:

- The resilience of the child Jesus and the toughness of his parents, who prove stronger by listening to God than is King Herod, who relies on the power of the sword alone.
- The endurance and faithfulness of a God who has been with God's people from Abraham to David, from Sarah to Mary, never giving up on them, and promising in Christ, never to give up on any of God's peoples, Jew or Gentile.

As we move closer and closer to the season of Lent (Ash Wednesday is 6th of March), we should recall that in the end God's strength will be shown not by any demonstration of power, but in the strength of one who desires so much to be with God's peoples that Christ is willing to endure absolutely anything to keep us in relationship with God. God's strength will be seen precisely in the renunciation of power on the cross—the demonstration of the strength of compassion, of love with us and for us, even unto death.

To believe that the very being of God is seen in Jesus of Nazareth is to trust that the resilience, toughness, endurance and faithfulness required by life is also to be found in one's journey from cradle to cross, from Bethlehem to Golgotha.

To believe in God-in-the-Christ-child is to believe that we can turn loose of our desperate attempts to find something or someone else with whom to trust our hearts desires, and that God's desire for humanity is for something that power alone can never grant us.

**For the strength of God, and God's gift of strength to those who place their trust just here,
is the strength of love, the strength to love, the strength from love.**

*Oh how you have expanded and deepened my capacity to Love dear St. Johns Episcopal Church,
as ones who place their trust in God. NLJ+*

An Invitation

Following the 11:00 service on the 24th of February, I'd like to gather in the sanctuary with those who may like to have a conversation about some of the “nips and tucks” that have been made in our 11:00 liturgy; as well as the upcoming season of Lent and how we can liturgically define this holy season together. All are Welcome. We will not go beyond 30 minutes as I have the service at Trinity which begins promptly @ 1:30. Thank you.