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## *The Feast of the Epiphany is a Journey*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

The Feast of the Epiphany arrived in Atlanta with the threat of icy precipitation and freezing temperatures. As usual in the South, even the threat of inclement wintry weather excited us a bit. School children wondered if their vacations would be extended by a day. Citizens and parents turned to television and websites to determine if schedules would be changed.

It turned out that the ice and freezing rain avoided the immediate Atlanta area. Yet, many schools were nevertheless closed; and many schools decided to close again on the day after Epiphany, on a day whose low temperatures broke records across the country. (And even children agreed with their parents that they sure wished school would resume!)

There are always some events in our life journey that cause us to change our schedules. There are funerals and medical emergencies. There are family needs. And there is unusual weather. These events not only change our schedules; they cause us to slow down. But our slowing down is an important part of the journey.

What did you actually do when the weather changed your plans on the Feast of the Epiphany, or on the day afterwards? Or, what did you do during the last time you cancelled a meeting to attend a funeral or tend to a medical emergency? What did you actually do when life caused you to slow down a bit? Did you see any light?

The Feast of the Epiphany, twelve days after Christmas, has been known as a party day. Twelfth Night parties, and Boar's Head Feast parties, and Burning of the Greens parties have been fun. I understand that, for some, the day actually begins the New Orleans carnival season!

But Epiphany can also be a day to slow down and watch. Twelve days after Christmas, the hype and energy of the Christmas season has definitely died out. We have learned to rest again, learned to enjoy our regular family life and community life again, and even our jobs and schools. We hear again the story of wise men coming from afar, following a star, seeking out the infant Jesus.

Some features of the Gospel of Matthew suggest that the wise men found Jesus much later after his birthday. By the time they arrive, they enter a "house," not a "stable" as in the Gospel of Luke. Maybe Jesus was in a house by then. Furthermore, the notion that Herod seeks to kill all young children up to two years of age, suggests that the wise men may have arrived up to two years after Jesus' actual birth.

Whatever the story, my sense of Epiphany is that it takes time. It would be wondrous to see some great meteor and comet or star and have our lives changed all at once. But my sense is that real life-changing events take time. I think it took the wise men a long time to find Jesus; they had to work at it. "A cold coming we had of it," is the way T.S. Eliot described their journey, "this Birth was / Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death." (from *The Journey of The Magi*).

I hope your Epiphany is a journey, a light-shining journey. It will probably not occur suddenly; it will take time. The

manifestation of God's light in the world takes time. We may have to slow down, and change our schedules to appreciate it. But if we stop for a moment and look around, we may just see a light that was not there before. It is the Light of Christ, leading us to new life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
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