

Henry Van Dyke is maybe best known for writing the lyrics of the song “Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee.” In his lifetime, he had been a minister in the Presbyterian church, professor at Princeton University, an expert fly-fisherman, a poet, an author, a song-writer, a diplomat, and a World War I chaplain holding the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

A short story he wrote titled “The Story of the Other Wise Man” deals with an ‘unknown’ fourth wise man. Who always seems to be one step behind where he needs to be.

At the beginning of the story, he sets out to meet up with the three wise men, we already know, but stops to help an injured man whom he nurses back to health. When he gets to the meeting place, they’ve already left. So he heads out again.

The story is a series of events, where, he keeps stopping to help people, and never quite gets where he’s going.

At the end of the story, he arrives in Jerusalem - 30 or more years later. He’s very old, and has given away his share of the treasure to help people along the way. He witnesses Jesus’ death on the Cross, and exhausted ... he prepares to die. Three days later, Jesus comes to him and embarrassed, the other wise man apologizes that he no longer has any treasure to give Him.

At the end of the story, the risen Jesus tells him, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Today is the celebration of the Epiphany of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. And we commemorate, as we sang, the Three Kings.

Epiphany is a word that comes from the Greek, and means “shining forth” or “coming into view.” The feast originated in the Eastern Church, and celebrates all of the “comings” into view of Jesus - namely His birth, the arrival of the Three Kings, His baptism, and His first miracle at the wedding in Cana. We will celebrate these “comings” of Jesus over the next few weeks.

We can take for our reflection this week the question of - “How do we allow Jesus to ‘shine forth’ in our lives?” ... or “How does Jesus come into view through our own lives.”

The material treasures of the fictional fourth wise man were gone, but his eternal treasures were secure in the many things he did to help others on his journey.

Let us resolve to allow Jesus to shine through us in our daily lives. And as we approach the altar to receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us ask for the graces to bring Jesus into view and let Him shine forth in all that we do.