

CHRISTMAS HOMILY BY THE PASTOR

In the beginning was the Word, and [it] became flesh, and it is full of grace and truth. These are scriptures we hear every year around this time. We all seem to know, if we have not been told, that the "Word," (which in the original Greek is "logos") is a direct reference to Jesus. We could take some of the beauty and the mystery out of it simply by saying "In the beginning was God, and God became flesh in Jesus, and our heritage from this is grace and truth."

However, the Greek word logos is a word with various meanings. It is most often translated into English as "Word" but can also mean thought, speech, account, meaning, reason, proportion, principle, standard, or logic, among other things. The Evangelist referred to as John has a very different and mystical way of writing in contrast to the other 3 Gospels. He is sort of a poet - where the selection of ideas shared and the chosen imagery to display them, can mean so much more than what is transcribed.

And when we think about the Baby Jesus, being the Word of God, well, isn't it a bit ironic? Because Babies share no words. The most frustrating thing about Babies is that they can't talk to us. We have to learn from early on to read their communication attempts, and through trial and error we sometimes succeed. And by the time we get it down - they start speaking!

Same thing happens when in a foreign country, and you don't speak the language, or when a beloved one is suffering from some form of dementia and can no longer communicate. Or when you have lost a loved one and yet discover the remembrance of that soul is like a form of communicating with it.

The Word is far more than words, it is a form of sharing, of communicating, of being, which supersedes all words; and poets know this. Lovers know this. Parents know this . . . in some mystical wonder-full way, we all know that communication is far more than Words.

And today we contemplate the form of God that was given to us as Jesus, the new born. Pure and simple baby, with no words, and yet who has not found themselves breathless at the appearance of a baby? How helpless and vulnerable, and yet profound and magnificent!! The outside world stops when truly admiring babies.

Babies' futures are unknown and mysterious . . . just as our futures often are. Yet we adults expect ourselves to be in control of our present moments and our future plans, and when we aren't fear often creeps in.

That is why the beginning of true oneness with God is equivalent to a newborn child. Our journey of faith begins when we can wordlessly, and with gratitude trust our future into God's care.

Some days of our lives can be dark and if we respond to darkness with fear, we can miss the light of the Incarnate One's Hope. The beginning of Hope is to trust, as a child trusts. We are so limited in what we can know, but God is not. And when we can remind ourselves this when we are feeling lost and scared.

God is all that we know and don't know . . . God is the Logos . . . thought, speech, account, meaning, reason, proportion, principle, standard, logic, or The Word . . . the Christ Child, the Christ Adult, the Incarnate Christ, the Risen Christ, the Christ of hope. And today, we focus on God as the infant Jesus, pure and simple, incarnate Hope.

We have this image of God as a Baby - because that God, powerful and omnipotent as God is - still needs to be loved and cherished and cared for as a Baby. The God in each of us is as fragile and desirous of love and attention as a baby is.

Our faith can be fragile - the love we share with those closest to our hearts and souls can be fragile - and we need to be reminded tonight that love is precious. We all need to love and feel love. That is why this baby grows up to preach forgiveness and reconciliation and sacrificial love - giving up our lives for the love of others - because the truth of this night is that God is a Baby, too.

We are birthing, again, tonight ~ our faith ~ full of joy and love and peace. We are all together, if for only a few seconds, warm in the manger and surrounded by the glow of newness. And in that faith, at least this night, we can be revived in the newness of hope. Hope that in this new year ahead of us ~ our relationship with God will grow as consistently as a baby. Each day; may our trust in God grow, may our love and involvement with each other grow, may our compassion for others grow, may our commitment to serve grow. We are all connected one to another - and all to God. This Holiest of Nights belongs to all of us.

LET US PRAY:

Loving God, open our hearts and minds to the truth made manifest in Christ, that you are with us. You are with us now, in this moment, flowing like a secret spring in our innermost being. May the simple beauty of the birth of Jesus summon us always to love what is most deeply human, and to see your love reflected in those whose lives we touch. May the testimony of creation - in the stable animals and the very heavens - summon us to cherish all life, and to see your goodness in the beauty of this Earth. May the peace that one knows when a baby sleeps contentedly on your chest, fill your hearts and minds and souls this night, and revisit you time and time again for the rest of your lives. AMEN