

***The Word Made Flesh***

Christmas Day Homily

One of the gifts and privileges of being a priest is that every day of my life the Word is made flesh as I pray the Words of Jesus:

***“Take this all of you and eat of it, for this is my Body which will be given up for you.”***

When I was ordained a Catholic Priest on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2013 the Rite of Ordination included the anointing of my hands by the Bishop. This is because my hands would from that day forward be offered to Jesus to hold him in my hands so that they become a monstrance every time I elevate him and say:

***“Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the Sins of the World. Blessed are those who are called to the Supper of the Lamb.”***

The Eucharist is at the Centre of our Catholic Faith because it is the continuation of the words from today’s Gospel:

***“The Word was Made Flesh and Dwelt Among Us”***

The word used for “dwelt” would better be translated “tabernacled” among us. To my left is the Tabernacle where the Eucharistic Lord dwells with us every day. Now think about this with me. Every day, regardless of the physical, mental, emotional or spiritual space I am in, the Lord is here dwelling among us. Those days when I celebrate Mass with fervour and a deep awareness of the Lord’s presence Jesus is made present right in front of my eyes. Those days when I am heavy hearted, distracted and worried by many things, struggling with believing in God’s loving goodness, I say the Words “This is My Body” Jesus dwells right here on this altar. He tabernacles, pitches his tent in our midst regardless of how I am doing, regardless of how you are doing.

Why is this so important to me and perhaps for you to realize? Because in a world where I can be so unsettled by the events that engulf our times, by the interior struggle with sin and at times, overwhelming accusation of the enemy’s lies that try to discourage and defeat me, I need to turn to the one who is constant and true. I need to hear from Jesus the Word who orientates and directs my life. But how hard it can be for me to hear the Word because it is as small as a baby lying in a manger. It can seem inaudible when compared to the cacophony of voices that want to drown out the voice of the Word Made Flesh.

- The voice of scepticism
- The voice of defeatism
- The voice of accusation
- The voice of criticism
- The voice of anxiety
- The voice of doubt

- The voice of unbelief
- The voice of hopelessness
- The voice of despair

How present these voices can be and how often I hear people express one or more of them when in the Confessional..... How often I express one of these voices when I go to confession.

Christmas is the Day when Jesus invites us to remember once more that these voices are not the authentic voice, they are the voice of the deceiver, the accuser, the devil. The authentic voice belongs to the one who according to Hebrews sustains all things by his powerful word. That is to say that Jesus is the one who upholds the whole universe because he is the Word that with the Father in the beginning made all things. All things, says St John:

***came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being.***

The Scriptures for today's Mass make this staggering declaration. The One hidden in the Eucharist, the One who abides in the Tabernacle is the one through whom the Big Bang originated and he is the one whose Word allows for you and me to have life this very minute.

But here is the thing, this cannot be decisively proved so that it is obvious to you. It requires trust and understanding that a God who became so small could only be mercy and love. And those who do realize this, and see in the small one the Word - of them St John writes:

***He gave power to become Children of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.***

To be born of God is to have the deepening realization that while we have to live in the world and all that this means for our daily lives we are ever more fully recognizing that what governs and orientates my life here below is the life that is from above, heaven coming down to earth.

Another translation of the verse I just quoted in part reads:

***But whoever did want him,  
who believed he was who he claimed  
and would do what he said,  
He made to be their true selves,  
their child-of-God selves.  
These are the God-begotten<sup>1</sup>***

When we have a deepening realization of what it means to be God-begotten we can hear these words from the Catechism:

***“The only begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men (and women) gods.” (CCC 460).***

---

<sup>1</sup> Peterson, E. H. (2005). [\*The Message: the Bible in contemporary language\*](#) (Jn 1:12–13). NavPress.

Now at first glance that might sound blasphemous, it might sound like the Catechism is saying that Christ became man so that we can become divine persons that we can become gods, almost sounding like Mormonism. That is not what it means. It doesn't mean that we become divine persons, it means that we become partakers of the divine nature. We become partakers of the immortality of God, the goodness of God, the life of God, the love of God. We become sharers in all of that so that we really do become sons and daughters of God in the Son. And that's really the ultimate mystery of Christmas, it is our entry into the life of the Trinity. That we become sons and daughters in the Son so that we can worship the Father in the power the Holy Spirit and enter into that "eternal exchange of love" which is the blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (see CCC 221). And if that strikes you as a little too dramatic way to describe the Incarnation, hear what we say in the Mass when the priest mingles the water and the wine:<sup>2</sup>

***"By the mingling of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity."***

It is this same thought expressed in the Collect with which this Mass began.

***O God we pray that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.***

This is the beauty of Christmas that not only does the Word become Flesh in the Eucharist but Jesus wants to be the Word Made Flesh in your life and mine. This is so that by his grace at work in our lives as we learn to hear his voice we can become ever more authentic men and woman Jesus longs for us to be. When we discover the One the priest elevates in the Mass is the Hidden One who comes all the way down as the Word Made Flesh to where we are so he can draw us all the way up to where He is.

May you invite him to ever more be made flesh in your life and May Jesus bless you this Christmas Day.

---

2