

Christmas Day
December 25, 2008

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Minneapolis, Minnesota

✧ Jesu juva ✧

THE WORD MADE FLESH

John 1:1-14

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God.” When St. John proclaims Jesus as the Word of God, he is not speaking metaphorically, but literally. He is describing the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, according to His divine nature. God the Word is begotten of God the Father from all eternity. He was with the Father in the beginning. God does not exist without Him and never has. For He and the Father and the Spirit are One God.

And yet in their external works the three Persons have different roles and perform different things. As the Word of God, the Son is the “Mouthpiece” of the Trinity, the One who speaks forth God’s creative will and in the process creates what is willed. I teach our catechumens that He is the “do-er” of the Holy Trinity. God the Father wills. The Holy Spirit empowers and applies what is willed to its object. But God the Son, the Word, is the one who speaks that will into being, the one who acts.

St. John tells us: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” Likewise Genesis tells us that God created by speaking all things into existence. The Divine Son is the One that does this speaking. Psalm 33 says: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” His speech not only laid the framework for the earth, not only created an environment suitable for mankind; but also brought forth life to the earth and to mankind too. Every living thing finds its Genesis in His speaking. As John says, “In Him was Life.” According to Hebrews this speaking of God the Son is an ongoing creative activity, for He who spoke all things into being now upholds all things by His Word of power. Nothing exists apart from His continued will and speech. Without the ongoing activity of His Word it simply ceases to be. Hard to fathom isn’t it? But that is part of the mystery of God.

The Divine Word is also the God we come to know throughout the Old Testament. At times He is simply called the Lord (Yahweh/Jehovah), at other times the Angel of the Lord, at other times simply God. When God spoke with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, it was God the Word. When God appeared to Abraham, it was the same Divine Person. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, it was the Second Person of the Trinity. When God brought the plagues on the Egyptians, He spoke those plagues into being according to Psalm 105. When God led the people of Israel out of Egypt in the pillar of cloud and fire, that was the God the Son. When He inhabited the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, appearing above the Ark of the Covenant, it was likewise the Son of God. When God appears to kings or prophets or speaks to them, it is again God the Word that makes Himself known in this way. All throughout the Old Testament we have a revelation of the

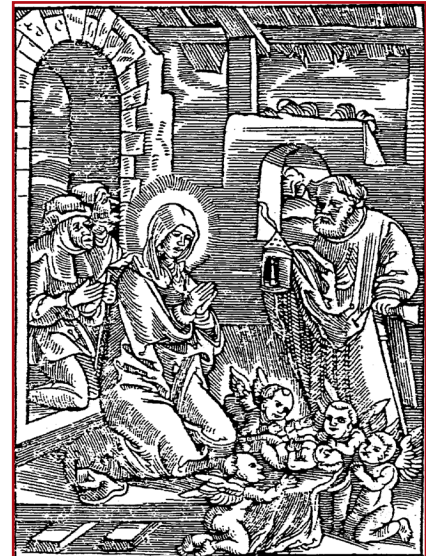
Second Person of the Trinity, the Word of God who was with God and who was God. Hence when speaking of God the Father, St. John says: “No one has seen God at any time.” No one, of course, except the Son of God. He was always the One who came “in the Name of the Lord”.

And today we ponder the wondrous mystery: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” God who created the world and everything that is in it, who was unapproachable in His holiness when He appeared to Moses and when He settled His glory cloud in the Tabernacle, now takes on human flesh in the womb of a Virgin.

And how did this great mystery occur? The Word was spoken to Mary and she conceived Him in her womb. The same Word that created the world now creates flesh for Himself from the substance of her flesh. God becomes a child, that we might become children of God.

He takes on our flesh in order live among us and show us His glory; and the glory He shows is not the dazzling Divine radiance that destroys sinners, but the grace and truth spoken of by St. John this day. Grace in that He comes to speak salvation to sinners, truth both in that His Word is in and of itself absolute truth, and that He by the same Word makes us what He calls us to be. We were sinners but now through the power of His Word we are created anew: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” As St. Paul says: “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...”

We chanted these words this Christmas Day: “Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. God is the Lord, and He has given us light. That was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.” Indeed what could be more marvelous?! God has become a man like us. And through the speaking of His Gospel, through that same speaking in Holy Baptism, (the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit spoken of by St. Paul), and through His continued speaking to us, He has spoken new life into us, given us new birth, opened our ears to His grace and truth, and elevated us to be like He is, holy sons of God. And all of this because He is the eternal Word of God who speaks into being that which was not, who became flesh and dwelt among us, who dwells among us now through His Gospel. Indeed, blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord, who has saved us by His mercy, and justified us by His grace. Amen.



✧ Soli Deo gloria ✧