

2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY, C
UNDERSTANDING THE WORD MADE FLESH

“In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God ... The Word was made flesh, he lived among us” (Jn. 1: 1-2, 14)

God, our Creator and Father: We have just celebrated Christmas to mark the Birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. The joy of the festive season is still very palpable in our midst. The Readings of today’s Mass keep this euphoria alive as they guide us to reflect on Christ, “The Wisdom of the Father” (in the First Reading – Ecclesiasticus 24: 1-2, 8-12); “The Eternal Word of the Father made flesh and dwelt among us” (in the Gospel – Jn. 1: 1-18), in Whom God “chose us before the foundation of the world” (Second Reading – Eph. 1: 3-6, 15-18). These Readings attest that God is not only the Creator of the universe but a Father, Who loves us so much that He chose us in Him before the world began. Let us reflect on this theme from the perspectives presented to us here.

For us men and for our Salvation: In the Creed, we profess, among other things:

“I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only begotten Son of the Father, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

Here we profess that Christ is one with the Father as His Only Begotten Son, Who existed before all creation, through Whom all things were made; that He came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. The expression: “For us men and for our salvation” captures the whole purpose of “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” This is the reason for all God’s actions through Christ – for us and for our salvation! This is what defines God’s love for us all. It is because of His love for us that He created the universe and “put all things under our feet” (Ps. 8: 6). “For us men and for our salvation”, He chose us in Christ to be His adopted sons and daughters (Eph. 1: 3). When we sinned and severed that relationship, “for us men and for our salvation”, He sent His Son to dwell among us, like us in all things but sin. “For us men and for our salvation”, Christ died for us, while we were still sinners (Rom. 5: 8) so that we may have life in full (Jn. 10: 10). We are reminded today that “for us men and for our salvation”, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” All of God’s actions are “for us men and for our salvation.”

How Did The Word dwell Among us? This is an interesting query. God, in Jesus Christ, did not dwell among us as God, above and unperturbed by our human situations. But He dwelt among us as one of us in all things but sin. He was born of a woman. Grew up through the normal developmental stages of human growth – learning and being taught

craft by the foster, Joseph. At the age of twelve, He got missing from His parents, stayed back in Jerusalem, causing anxiety for His parents who roamed the city for three days before they could find Him in the temple “about His Father’s business” (Lk. 2: 29). He had and expressed emotions too: He had friends in Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and John; He had twelve special friends and co-workers. Twice He cried over the city of Jerusalem; He cried over His friend Lazarus. He had pity on people and was empathetic in their situations. Hence, he fed the multitude, who were with Him for days and hungry. He raised the only son of the widow of Nain; the twelve-year old girl; and His friend Lazarus. He shared in the sufferings and pains of the sick around Him. Therefore, He cured Peter’s mother in-law of fever; cleansed ten lepers, the two blind men, the sick man by the well of Bethsaida, the woman with haemorrhage, and many more. He was weak and tired after a long day. Thus, He slept in boat as His disciples were about to perish. He was afraid, when His death was near and prayed: “Father, let this cup pass Me by.” (Matt. 26: 39). He was judged, like any of us, condemned in innocence and crucified and died. His life was a total manifestation of God, the Father’s love for us His children. He assumed our form, experienced our weakness to transform our human nature and give us hope that we too can transcend these conditions.

The Word Dwelt Among us to Reveal the Father: In today’s Gospel we read: “No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father’s heart, who has made Him known” (Jn. 1: 18). What John is telling us here is what St Paul tells us in his Letter to the Colossians (1: 15): “Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God.” These mean that it is through Christ that we can come to know the Father. Jesus is the physical and visible revelation of the Father. He is the Way to the Father. We can only get to know the father by knowing the Son, Jesus. We can know Jesus the same ways we know one another – by relating with Him. Relationship builds acquaintance and friendship, through prayers, we get to know Jesus, as He listens and converses with us. When prayer is persistent, we develop a bond and love. The gospel is another medium of knowing Jesus. There are no better historical books on Jesus like the gospels, which provide both historical knowledge and spiritual depth.

My dear friends, Jesus is the Eternal Word of the Father made flesh to dwell amongst us. He took up our nature so that he could be compassionate and understanding with us in our weaknesses, and so, intercede for us before the Father. It is through Him that we have forgiveness for our sins and the fullness of grace thereof. By His nature as man, Christ has revealed the image of God the Father to us. Let us therefore, get to know Jesus, the Son, through prayers and the gospels so that we may know the Father.