

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, 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.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Sermon

Silent night, Holy night, all is calm, all is bright

Round yon virgin, Mother and child,

Holy infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

As a little boy I remember hearing this song as I rode in the backseat of our family's station wagon. I asked my mom if this song was about Jesus and she said yes. As I gazed out the window into the rain I started crying as I listened to this song for it touched me deeply.

Yesterday, we heard the story of an angel bringing a message from God to a humble and frightened young woman named Mary.

Mary listened to the angel's words:

Do not be afraid.

You will bear a son and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great.

His kingdom will have no end.

For nothing is impossible with God.

And Mary answered with these words, “Here am I,
the servant of the lord.”

Mary said yes.

This morning, the Christmas story continues in the gospel of John. This is not the Christmas story we are used to, there are no shepherds, no star in the night sky, no gift of gold. Instead there is the word and the word became flesh and lived among us.

Jesus is finally here and he enters the world like each and everyone of us. Everything we know and even everything we cannot know has been brought into being through this small helpless child, born on this day into time and history.

The word became flesh and lived among us.

Words have the ability to change us, but we need to stop and listen.

A few days ago, I took my class to a field trip. We walked from Aliiolani School all the way to Duk Hee Chinese restaurant near 12th Avenue.

It was a long walk.

But my students loved the adventure.

As we passed others along the street, one of my students would cheerfully greet adults that he passed by with a “Merry Christmas!”

Do you know that only one replied to him and the rest ignored him?

Are their lives so difficult that they cannot hear or respond to a little child’s greeting?

Words can hurt. The lack of words too.

Words can cause wars, or create peace.

Words can comfort.

For me, I find it so difficult to say those three little words that my wife always wants to hear me say—“you were right!”

We all long to be acknowledged and loved.

The world associates Christmas with children, and not just because of the birth of the baby Jesus. Children quickly let you know what they want, sometimes very loudly, and they show their joy when they get it, and their disappointment when they don't.

The world, and the church, also associate Christmas with the poor and the outcast, most likely because the Christmas story tells us of a homeless family forced to sleep in a stable. We can tell what they need because we can clearly see what they don't have.

The truth is we all have things we want desperately, although we may hide our deepest desires under gruff exteriors or under a mask of false cheerfulness.

We all have things we need, but are so afraid to show it, our pride gets in the way and we don't want to seem lonely or left out. Oftentimes we are so used to this emptiness inside of our hearts that we don't even know how to ask for help.

Christmas is a story about all of us receiving that which we want and need the most—love—deep, strong, and unconditional love.

God asks us, like Mary and Joseph, to learn to hear and understand the cries of a baby, and listen to the cries of all who need to be cared for—children, families, older people, people who are sick, the poor—and each other. Once we listen and understand, we are called to respond in love.

The Word became flesh and lived among us.

The child born of Mary changes everything. This child changed the way the entire world works!

This child will show us the way to live our lives with love, compassion, goodness, and kindness. This child will show us how to change the world.

Mary and Joseph made a loving home for the Word, for Jesus.

Will we?

Will we invite the person of Jesus into our lives?

Will we listen to him?

He is in our world now, today, tomorrow, and in the New Year and beyond.

He is with us in the middle of summer, when
Christmas Day seems forever away.

And we will hear him, but we need to listen!

He will be in the laughter and cries of children.

He will be in the cries of families who have been
broken apart by violence and despair.

He will be in the cries of the elderly who are alone
and frightened.

He will be in our own cries of pain.

He will be in the laughter of people coming together
in love.

He is here right now.

He is with us every single day.

Be present and involved in this big world in which we live in.

The Word became flesh and lives among us.

May each day be Christmas and may we tell the story by how we live our lives each and every day, the story of how we cared for the presence of Christ by caring for each other.

Reconcile with long lost friends.

Forgive yourself.

Forgive an enemy.

Be generous.

Be patient and not angry.

Be kind.

Love and you will be loved.

May God bless you and keep you. Have a blessed
Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Amen