

## **The Word Made Flesh Among Us**

John 1:1-18, Second Sunday of Christmas, 5 January

As we gather on this Second Sunday of Christmas—the final day of this blessed season—we are called to reflect deeply on the mystery of the Incarnation. Christmas is not simply about remembering the birth of Christ; it is about embracing the truth that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." This season reminds us of the closeness of God, who chose to live among us, sharing our humanity to bring us life and light.

Today, as the Christmas season concludes, we are invited to carry its message forward into the coming days and months. While we celebrate this Sunday, we also anticipate the Epiphany, a day that reminds us of the manifestation of Christ to the nations, symbolized by the visit of the Magi. The Epiphany invites us to reflect on the universality of Christ's mission—His light shining not just for a chosen few but for all people.

The Gospel reading we reflect on today is a powerful reminder that Jesus, the eternal Word, chose to enter a world of division and darkness to bring unity, healing, and light. Just as the Magi followed the star to discover the newborn King, we too are called to follow the light of Christ, allowing it to guide us beyond our divisions and uncertainties.

This Gospel was written at a time of great uncertainty and division. For Jewish Christians, it was a period of painful separation from their synagogues and communities. Having embraced Jesus as the Messiah, they were often ostracized by their own families and neighbors. They faced the challenge of holding onto their faith while feeling isolated from the traditions and people they had always known.

For Gentile Christians, the struggles were different but no less challenging. They had to reconcile their newfound faith in Christ with the pervasive Roman culture that worshiped many gods and exalted the emperor as divine. To follow Jesus meant turning away from societal norms and values that often stood in stark opposition to the Gospel. It was a journey of transformation that required courage, humility, and a willingness to embrace a new identity.

This division and uncertainty were not just external; they often reflected the inner struggles of the heart. The Gospel of John addresses these struggles, reminding its readers that the Word became flesh not just to bring light into a dark world but to heal and transform the hearts of individuals. That message remains deeply relevant for us today.

Even now, we see hardened hearts—hearts that struggle with broken relationships, unresolved anger, and a reluctance to forgive. This is not limited to those who are materially poor or marginalized. Often, those who appear to live comfortably, who

have all the resources they need, also wrestle with inner turmoil, isolation, and the inability to love or be loved. Their hearts, too, need the transformative light of Christ.

Accepting Jesus means more than acknowledging Him as the Son of God. It requires us to allow His presence to transform us from within. To accept Jesus is to surrender our pride, our selfishness, and our indifference. It is to let His light shine through us in every decision we make, every word we speak, and every act of kindness we perform. Yet, how often do we resist this transformation? How often do we hold onto anger, cling to grudges, or close our eyes to the suffering around us?

Even within the church, we sometimes fail to truly accept Christ. When we allow division, judgment, or hypocrisy to take root, we push Him aside. When we focus on ourselves rather than on service to others, we fail to live out the grace and truth He brought into the world. To accept the Word made flesh is to recognize His presence not only in the beauty of worship but also in the faces of the poor, the marginalized, and yes, even those who might seem to have everything but lack peace and purpose in their lives. Jesus is among us, but do we see Him?

Now that we stand at the close of Christmas and on the threshold of the Epiphany, we are reminded of the ongoing challenge this season brings. Christmas is not merely a time to celebrate the birth of Christ; it is an invitation to allow His presence to dwell in us every day. The Epiphany reminds us of our call to reflect His light to all nations. The Word became flesh not just to visit us but to transform us. The question is: Will we let Him?

To truly celebrate Christmas and Epiphany is to embrace the call to live as children of God. It is to let the light of Christ shine in our relationships, our communities, and our world. Our world—marked by division, suffering, and uncertainty—longs for this light. Imagine the transformation if we, as a community of believers, truly reflected His love and grace in everything we do.

As we leave behind the Christmas season and look ahead to the revelation of Christ's light in the Epiphany, let us not let its message fade into a memory or tradition. Instead, let it be the beginning of a renewed commitment to follow Christ fully. Let us open our hearts and lives to Him, letting His presence shape us into the people He calls us to be. Jesus, the Word made flesh, still dwells among us. He calls us to live as His light-bearers, bringing hope, peace, and love to those in need of healing—whether in body, heart, or soul.

Let us embrace this call. Let us be witnesses of His light, not only here in our congregation but wherever we go. And let us always remember: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." May this truth not only fill our hearts this Christmas season but guide us every day of our lives. Amen.