

2ND SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY

THE WORD IS JESUS, AND JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF LIFE

“In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God, and the Word was God”

(Jn. 1: 1)

At last, we all can heave a sigh of relief after such a difficult, different and a life-altering year-like-no-other. Now the New Year 2021 is here. We can look forward in hope for a better future. Though the news does not seem very promising with new variants and mutations of the virus spreading across the globe, and especially in our clime, there is a silver lining in the cloud with more vaccines to counter the threats of any imminent dangers. One thing I know and can really say is that God will not abandon us to the claws of this insidious virus. The Readings of this Sunday reveal God as the Creator of the universe, Who is not a *Deus absconditus* but that God Who is definitely present in our midst to share in our stories and journey with us in Christ, *The Word made flesh*, through human history.

St. John’s Gospel is unique in many ways. One of John’s peculiarity is his presentation of Jesus in poetic-prose. He opens with the words that take us to the very beginning of the Bible: “In the beginning ...” (Gen. 1: 1). The Gospel of John sets the tone for the beginning of a new creation. For him, that is what and who Jesus stands for – a new beginning. Jesus came to recreate the universe that was created “through Him, with Him and in Him.” He came to rewrite the history of humanity and raise it from the damnation of Adam to the salvation that would come through His sacrifice on the Cross and Resurrection. He was from the beginning with God and was God. He alone reveals the Father with impeccable clarity because He shares an uncommon intimacy with the Father in all eternity.

The expression “In the beginning ...” makes a special impact as we are *at the beginning* of a New Year. John presents Jesus as The Word and The Light, Who is also The Wisdom of God. These identities are very essential in understanding Jesus’ relationship with the Father, and how they can enhance our personal relationship with both the Father and the Son.

Jesus As the Word: The Prologue of St. John’s Gospel begins with these words: “In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God” (Jn. 1: 1). He expatiates a little further to say: “He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through Him,” As the Eternal Logos, Jesus had no beginning in time. He was with and is God. At the appointed time, “The Word became flesh and lived among us.” (Jn. 1: 14). This is the Incarnation, that God became man and lived among us. *At the beginning* of a

New Year, it is pertinent for us to personally examine our relationship with The Word both as the Person of Jesus Christ and as His spoken Word in the Gospels. St. John also writes: “He came to His own domain and His own people did not accept Him.” (Jn. 1: 11). His own people then were His Jewish brethren, the Pharisee, the Scribes, the Sanhedrin and the teachers of the Law who cantankerously in opposition to all His deeds until they nailed Him to the Cross. We are His own people today – we the baptised, who profess faith in Him. How have we received Him? Or do we reject Him in the poor, the imprisoned and in the vulnerable? Have we been able to integrate Him in our policy-making procedures, in our educational curriculum and in our boardroom meetings? Where can the Word be found in our midst today? At the beginning of this New Year, let us resolve to be more open to the Word: by listening, by reading, living and by eagerly sharing the “joy of the gospel” with others. With the Psalmist, we should be able to say: “Your Word is a light for my steps” (Ps. 119: 105). The Word of God is the seed that needs to be planted and nurtured to grow in our society. No one will do that if we do not.

Jesus as The Light: St. John tells us that “The Word was the True Light that enlightens all men. The Light shines in the dark; the Light that darkness could not overcome” (Jn. 1: 5). Jesus affirms this identity in John 8: 12: “I am the light of the world.” And adds an interesting part to it: “... anyone who follows Me will not walk in the dark, but will have the light of life.” As the True Light, Jesus is the Source of authentic life that is opposed to darkness. This is the life that each of us is called to live *at the beginning* of this New Year. Every beginning makes time out for planning and strategizing. What plans do we have? What strategies are we putting in place so that we can respond to this Light? Shall we accept or shall we reject the true Light in preference to darkness because of our deeds (Jn. 3: 19-21)? Every sin and every work of evil is darkness and is opposed to the Light.

Dear friends, *at the beginning* of this New Year, let us look back with gratitude, embrace the present with courage and look to the future with hope trusting in God Who chose us in Christ to be His adopted sons and daughters (Eph. 1: 4,5). Let us pray that God may give us the spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring us to full knowledge of Him. May we be humble and submissive so that We may be docile to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we set on our journey this New Year.