

Christmas Day  
10:00

## HE HAS, HE DOES

Did Deacon Rick read the wrong gospel? It's Christmas. Where are the shepherds and angels, Mary and Joseph? Where's baby Jesus? That's all part of the nativity story of Luke and we heard it last night. No. Deacon Rick didn't read the wrong gospel. Today we listen to the nativity story according to John and just as John's gospel is different from the other three, so too is his nativity story.

It has been said that John takes us back to the beginning, the beginning of time, that he takes us into the interior life of God. He says, *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*. What soon follows may be some of the most important words of the Bible: *The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us*. More literally it says, *the word was made flesh and pitched his tent among us*. Unlike the prophets of the Old Testament who spoke the word of God, Jesus is the word God speaks to us. As the second reading tells us, God has spoken through his son.

There's a question many of us can ask: *Why doesn't God just show himself?* He has. In the person of Jesus, God has revealed himself so much that many people have a hard time accepting who Jesus really is.

Jesus comes as the human face of God. *He will say, Whoever has seen me has seen the Father*. Jesus makes God present in a new and radical way. He is the sacrament of the Father. He comes into our world, truly God and truly human. Truly God because only God can save us and truly human because only another person can give us an example. We affirm this every time we profess the creed acknowledging Jesus as, *God from God, light from light, true God from true God* and then saying *he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man*.

*Incarnate of the Virgin Mary*. Christmas is about the great, marvelous, mind boggling mystery of the Incarnation. Not reincarnation which has no place in Christian thought but Incarnation—the enfleshment of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity in Jesus.

By the Incarnation, the creator becomes a creature, the invisible one, visible; the all powerful one, limited; the immortal one, mortal; the infinite one, finite. By his human birth, Jesus enters into the world as you and I did: small, naked and helpless. He shares life with us. Now in the infant Jesus, God shed human tears.

He comes to make a marvelous exchange. At every Mass, while mixing the water and wine, the priest or deacon quietly says, *May we come to share the divinity*

*of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.* In other words, Jesus comes to share in our human life so that we might share in his divine life. Not a bad deal for us. He comes not for an easy life but for the challenges and struggles, to bear his cross, to die upon it and to rise from the dead. It's been said that the Christian life isn't a matter of imitating Jesus but rather being united with him.

He comes to make a gift of himself to us, to unite himself to us and he invites us to do the same; to make a gift of ourselves to him. He comes to reveal the depth of God's love, to save us from sin and death and to lead to share more completely in the life and love of God that we call the Blessed Trinity.

O.K. God has revealed himself in Jesus over 2000 years ago but what about us? What about today? Why doesn't Jesus continue to show himself? He does. Jesus is the Sacrament of the Father who gives us the sacrament of the Church to continue to make himself present in any number of ways. This includes each of the seven sacraments. Jesus continues to reveal himself and here in the Eucharist, he continues to enter into our world, in the flesh, under the form of bread and wine.

In times past, people had to travel distances to get to Jesus, now he is as close as the nearest celebration of the Eucharist, as close as your nearest tabernacle. The Word pitched his tent among us and tabernacle means tent. At every Eucharist he gathers us together, instructs with his word and feeds us with his body and blood. With every worthy Communion we can say, Jesus born of Mary, now born in me; now born in us.

The same Jesus lying in the Bethlehem manger is the same Jesus present on the altar at every Mass. Here at the Eucharist, we can truly say that every day is Christmas. Jesus continues to be present when people gather in his name. He will say, *Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them.* He continues to reveal himself in his word. And it doesn't stop there. He not only shows himself to us, but allows us to see him in others. He continues to be present in those around us, particularly those in need. Think of, *I was hungry and you gave me to eat; thirsty and you gave me to drink* and all the rest. The more united we are with Jesus the more we can love our spouses, our children, our families, our neighbors, our enemies and everyone.

Why doesn't God show himself? *He has.* Why doesn't Jesus continue to show himself to us. *He does.* With lives of intentional faith, may we always have minds open to his truth, hearts open to his love and hands open to his service. Mirroring the generous love he shows to us may we follow in the comforting, challenging, cross and resurrection filled, wonderful mystery that he offers to us, as now in Jesus, God lives life with us.