

Connecting with the Sunday Readings

Epiphany of the Lord

Gospel Word

John 1:1–18

There is more than one way to tell the story of the birth of Jesus. Most of us connect easily to the part of the Gospels called “the infancy narratives,” the name given to the Christmas story, as told in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. The infancy narratives tell the story of Bethlehem, the inn, the angels, the shepherds and the wise men—the very human beginnings of the Son of God. The Gospel according to John tells the story of the birth of Jesus, from a much different perspective. John’s account is more poetic, theological, and symbolic. It begins by telling the divine beginnings of Jesus as God’s eternal word from the beginning— before time and history

Its central affirmation is the well-known passage, “And the Word [of God] became flesh and lived among us...” (John 1:14). This is the central affirmation of our Christian faith. We believe nothing less than God, in the person of Jesus, became human and revealed to us, who God is. The Gospel reading affirms that the Word of God, God’s Son, existed before the world came into being, before everything that God created! God, in all God’s being, has always existed! These are profound mysteries and our only response can be one of awe and gratitude. It is the heart of the Christmas story.

Living the Word

This is a Gospel reading that can be read a hundred times and with every reading, more spiritual insight is possible. So the first recommendation is to take some quiet time and read these first few verses of the Gospel according to John a few times.

Today’s Gospel reading affirms the importance of “the Word” but we are also led to think about the importance of all words, those we express and those that we hear. What we all desire is that “good words” enrich our lives, good words that we speak and good words that we receive from others. While there may be a lot of “empty words” in the world today, we hope that our words ring true and that they enrich our relationships. The words we express to others, especially those we live and work with, can have great power. They can brighten a day, motivate a friend, or cause sadness and hurt.

Do we really hear the good words that come our way, especially from those close to us? Because of all the empty and sometimes hostile media words and business jargon and the hype sent our way each day through advertising, we can end up closing ourselves to all the words sent our way as a form of self-protection. As a result, we may end up screening out the kind words of strangers, and the affectionate words coming to us from those we live with. It’s a question worth serious consideration.

One-line Prayer

Blessed God, Our Father and Creator,
Thank you for speaking to us in
the Person of your Son, Jesus.
Amen.

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Its central affirmation is the well-known passage, “And the Word [of God] became flesh and lived among us...” (John 1:14). This is the central affirmation of our Christian faith. We believe nothing less than God, in the Person of Jesus, became human and revealed to us who God is. In seeing Jesus, we see God. In listening to his words, we hear the voice of God.

Something like this process goes on in families. Parents offer themselves, *their* word, their presence, their energy, their wisdom, and their financial resources as expressions of the love that is in them for their children. Parents’ loving words create family, first in bringing new life into the world, and later, by nourishing that life with their blood, sweat and tears, somewhat like Jesus did.

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 1:1–18

This is a Gospel reading that can be read a hundred times, and with every reading more spiritual insight is gained. So, the first recommendation is to take some quiet time and read these first few verses of the Gospel according to John a few times. They have enriched the Church for centuries.

The Gospel reading affirms that the Word of God, God’s Son, existed before the world came into being. He was before everything that God created! God, in all God’s being, has always existed! Don’t try to understand that! It is way beyond our finite understanding, but it is certainly worth our meditation. We were created in time, and God exists outside of time. We are created, and God wasn’t. These are profound mysteries, and our only response can be one of awe and gratitude. It is the heart of the Christmas story.

This eternal God “spoke” to us by becoming a person. Jesus *Personified* God in human form. God wanted to be like us. God wanted to be with us. And God wants to do that forever!! And being made real children of God (which makes us part of God’s family), we will enjoy family life forever in heaven as well.

Parent Survival

Today's Gospel reading affirms the importance of "the Word" but we are also led to think about the importance of all words, those we express and those we hear. What we all desire is that "good words" enrich our lives, good words that we speak, and good words that we receive from others. While there may be a lot of "empty words" in the world today, we hope that our family words ring true and that they enrich our family relationships. The words we express to others, especially those we live with, can have great power. They can brighten the day of a child; they can do the same for a parent.

Are we really hearing the good words that are coming our way, especially from those close to us? Because of all the empty, and sometimes hostile media words, and business jargon, and the hype sent our way each day through advertising, we can end up closing ourselves to *all* the words sent our way as a form of self-protection. As a result, we may end up screening out the kind words of strangers and the affectionate words coming to us from those we live with. It's a question worth serious consideration.

Car or Meal Talk

What are some good words that each of us have heard lately from those in our family?

One-Line Prayer

Blessed God, Our Father and Creator,
Thank you for speaking to us in the Person
of your Son, Jesus.
Amen.