

**Holy Communion: 7:00 AM**  
**Wednesday December 27<sup>th</sup> 2006**  
**Church of the Ascension**

Celebrant: The Rev. Ms. J. DeVaty  
Prayers: Ms. J. Bandemer  
Homily: Mr. David Laughlin

*Psalm 92*  
*1 John 1:1-9*  
*John 21:19b - 24*

**Saint John: Apostle & Evangelist**

**Collect of the Day**

Shed upon your Church, O Lord, the brightness of your light, that we, being illumined by the teaching of your apostle and evangelist John, may so walk in the light of your truth, that at length we may attain to the fullness of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Homily**

I have always felt sorry for my friends who had their birthdays near Christmas. It just seemed as though they lost out on something. My birthday being in July is six full months before and after Christmas. Good timing Mom!

The three days after Christmas are like this: they are Church Holy Days that are often overlooked in the joy and let's face it, the busyness of the previous week. We are just too tired to have three more special days to think about!

But think about these three Holy Days:

**Yesterday** was the Commemoration of St. Stephen, Deacon and the first Martyr of the post-Pentecostal Church.

**Tomorrow** is the Commemoration of the Holy Innocents: the remembrance of the slaughter of the children by King Herod who was afraid of that other King: King Jesus.

These two days remind us that Christmas does not do away with loss and grieving: some get sick, and some die over Christmastide. These two holy days remind us of that: we are in the not yet of the coming Kingdom: tears still come to us. It is not until the final advent that all these things will be done away.

A relative of one of the mountain climbers who perished last week in CO put it this way:

**Sorrow peels back Christmas to the bare essentials... and intensifies our focus on Jesus and why we needed Him to come. Maybe in our troubles, we have even greater reason to celebrate His coming—for only in Him do we have a solid hope that one day He will wipe away all tears**

**Today is the Feast Day of St. John, Apostle & Evangelist**

It is impossible for us not to be thankful for this person! Let us recall some of his life:

**I. John was the brother of James and the son of Zebedee, and a fisherman by trade as were Peter and Andrew. His mother was Salome, who may have been related to the Blessed Virgin Mary.**

**Matthew 27:56**

*Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.*

**Mark 15:40**

*There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;*

**II. John often is said to go with Peter and/or James to be with or to help Jesus:**

1. the raising from the dead of the synagogues leader's 12 year old daughter (Mark 5:37)

2. the transfiguration of our Lord (Matthew 17:1ff)
3. along with Andrew at the Mount of Olives asking Jesus about the future (Mark 13:3)
4. With Peter to prepare the passover (Luke 22:8)
5. at Gethsemane with our Lord (Mark 14:33)
6. at the Table leaning on Jesus (John 13:23)
7. John outran Peter to the empty tomb (John 20:4)

### **III. At the cross our Lord gave care of his mother the Blessed Virgin Mary to John:**

*When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." John 19:26*

### **IV In Acts John is Peter's silent partner (Barrett)**

1. Healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3: 1ff)
2. Arrested for preaching the Gospel (Acts 4)
3. Sent to Samaria by the Apostles so that the new Believers would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14)

This is the same John who earlier in his life wanted to bring down fire to consume the Samaritans!

#### **Luke 9:52-54**

*And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; <sup>153</sup>] but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. <sup>154</sup>] When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"*

### **V. The name of John is on five different New Testament Books:**

the Gospel  
 the three Epistles  
 the Apocalypse, or unveiling

whether these are all the same John is a matter of debate:

I want to look briefly at the Gospel of John today

Again, perhaps the Gospel gets slighted at Christmas: we all know the Matthew and Luke passages: but as we saw at our quite Christmas morning service the first chapter of John is a fitting reading for Christmas as well!

### **The Gospel of John is an Incredible Book:**

**Leon Morris in his commentary on the Gospel compares it to a pool in which infants can wade and elephants can swim!**

**It records Seven Signs performed by Jesus (other Gospels call them Miracles)**

1. Water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11)
2. Healing the Nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)
3. Healing of lame man (John 5: 1-9)
4. Feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-15)
5. Walking on the Water (John 6:16-21)
6. Healing of the Blind man (John 9:1-7)
7. Raising of Lazarus (John 11:17-45)

**It records the "I am" passages:**

#### **John 4:26**

Jesus said to her, "**I am he (The Messiah)**, the one who is speaking to you."

#### **John 6:35**

Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life**. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

#### **John 6:51**

**I am the living bread** that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

#### **John 8:12**

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

**John 8:58**

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, **before Abraham was, I am.**"

**John 9:5**

As long as I am in the world, **I am the light of the world.**"

**John 10:7, 9**

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, **I am the gate for the sheep. I am the gate.** Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

**John 10:11**

**"I am the good shepherd.** The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**John 14:6**

Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through me.

**John 15:1**

**"I am the true vine,** and my Father is the vine grower.

**John 15:5**

**I am the vine,** you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

**It has the famous John 3:16 passage:**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

**And so on**

**But John's Gospel has one other feature that no other Gospel has: the Prologue which speaks so powerfully of the WORD:**

Let me read part of that first chapter which is every bit as much a story of the birth of Christ:

**John 1:1-14**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>[2]</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>[3]</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>[4]</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>[5]</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ....

<sup>[9]</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>[10]</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>[11]</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>[12]</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>[13]</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>[14]</sup> 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.

No more powerful description of God's love for us could be written

The WORD was in the beginning  
The WORD was with GOD  
The WORD was GOD  
The WORD created all things  
The WORD was Life  
The WORD was Light for all people

The WORD came to His own. How?  
The WORD was made Flesh!

I want us to meditate on this verse:

*The WORD was made Flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His Glory*

1. **THE** WORD was made Flesh  
not any old WORD: **THE** WORD  
the WORD spoken of in the above verses!

2. The **WORD** was made flesh:

The WORD who was in the beginning, who was with God, and was God, was the Light, the Life. That **WORD** was made flesh.

3. This WORD **WAS MADE** Flesh

**Was made:** something He was not

The Creator became one with the Created!

What? The eternal broke into time: But more!

As Wesley so wrote:

*'Tis mystery all: th'Immortal dies:  
Who can explore His strange design?*

4. The WORD was made **FLESH**

The text does not say the Word is made “human” or the Word took a body, but the WORD became Flesh!

He took our **Flesh** so we could partake of His **Spirit**!

**John Donne** HOLY SONNETS XV.

Wilt thou love God as he thee ? then digest,  
My soul, this wholesome meditation,  
How God the Spirit, by angels waited on  
In heaven, doth make His temple in thy breast.  
The Father having begot a Son most blest,  
And still begetting—for he ne'er begun—  
Hath deign'd to choose thee by adoption,  
Co-heir to His glory, and Sabbath' endless rest.  
And as a robb'd man, which by search doth find  
His stolen stuff sold, must lose or buy it again,  
The Sun of glory came down, and was slain,  
Us whom He had made, and Satan stole, to unbind.  
**'Twas much, that man was made like God before,  
But, that God should be made like man, much more.**

And . Gerard Manley Hopkins has a poem with the phrase:

*Both God's and Mary's Son*

5. The WORD was made Flesh and **dwelt among us** and we beheld His Glory

He came to us and dwelt with us: not permanently but for 30 years or so.

But a day will come when as Rev. 21:3 proclaims:

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
"See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;*

**He dwelt with us then for a time so we will dwell with Him forever**

6. The WORD was made Flesh and dwelt among us and **we beheld His Glory**

**His Glory!**

We do not have time today to deal with this great topic: just see this: just as the Glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle of the Old Covenant, so the Word which was made flesh displayed the Glory of God!

Today we give thanks that in His providence our God raised Up an Apostle like John who so clearly could write of Our Savior and His Love for the world.

As we come to the Table to receive of the sacrament of His Body and Blood, let us remember that our Lord is near to us:

near us in our joy to be sure: BUT ALSO  
near us in our sorrow

In the **past**: Christ was born, lived, died, rose again, ascended into Heaven for us.

**Now** Christ ever lives to make intercession for Us

In the **future** Christ will come again to restore His Kingdom on Earth for Us

**Now** Christ not only intercedes, but He comes to feed us with His Life giving Flesh and Blood:

His Body and Blood is **life giving** because He gave them up FOR us!

In John 6:35 Our Apostle tells us plainly what it means to eat and drink of Christ's body and blood.

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

So let us feed on Christ by faith, coming to Him and believing on Him, which enables us to truly partake of Christ in the Sacrament of His body and blood.