

Jesus Is The Real Thing (Homily for Lessons and Carols)

John 1:1-18 (John's Prologue)

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December 27, 2020

*<sup>1</sup>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 were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

*<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light but came to bear witness about the light.*

*<sup>9</sup>The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

The heart of our Lessons and Carols is Reading John's Prologue. It's read here every Christmas Eve, and on this first Sunday after Christmas. It's a theological statement about the nature of Jesus. A profound witness to Jesus. The Truth of the Son of God.

Truth.

We say it so often at the beginning of every service. "Let us worship in Spirit and in Truth." It leads us to ask that one question, "What is Truth?"

What is Truth to you?

Sure, we all know truth as the property of being in accord with fact or reality. Most, if not all of us want, and seek the truth. In fact, It was the phoniness, the fake ads of commercialism, that led Coca-Cola to use the slogan, It's the Real Thing, back in the 70s. A time when we saw commercials like Hai Karate after shave. The man running down the street fending off the women. Even the bottles came with self-defense instructions. I know, I use to have a few bottles as a teenager! These were fun and outrages commercials of the time. A time when Coca-Cola's brand manager, Ike Herbert, steps into the commercial light to claim Coke as the Real Thing! Sure, it's a great slogan, but it's still just another commercial.

In a world where every generation's views of truth, are debated among scholars, philosophers, and theologians we need to know where to turn to find truth. According to the Pew Research Center, over half, of American adults, learn about the world, and formulate their view of truth, through television and Social Media. But regardless of your perspective of truth; if your world view is coming from Fox News or CNN or Facebook or Twitter, the absolute truth, the summation of all world truth, is heard in John's Prologue. And what we always find, is that John makes it clear throughout his Gospel the Truth of the nature and relationship of Jesus with the Father.

And when we flip over to Chapter 20 of John's Gospel, John again so clearly states, that he writes all these things about Jesus for us to know the truth, and to believe. To believe the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God - that in this truth, You May Have Life in His name. You see, John's primary purpose is to tell the Truth of Jesus for faith. Telling us the Christmas Story.

The Christmas Story in the reality of The Word becoming Flesh and dwelling amongst us. The truth about God, the glory of His character, the nature of His life, and His desire to share that life with us.

Over this past month, we've enjoyed our journey to the manger - the Christmas Story of baby Jesus, having our Cress, our Nativity Scene; Singing our Christmas Carols of Shepherds and Rejoicing Angels. But if you think that you can't, tell the Christmas Story without these features, your wrong! Because, that's exactly what John does in his Prologue. Here in verse 14:

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and TRUTH."

This is the Story of Christmas. All wrapped up in one verse. This is why we celebrate Christmas. The Word becoming flesh and dwelling with us. That's the Lesson in one Verse! And our Christmas Carol, is our heart's praise to Him, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior.

His truth is as universal as the light that comes from the sun to brighten the day. Jesus did not come to a single nation or culture. Jesus is the True Light which gives light to everyone. He's the light of truth, the light of Life that shines on everyone. And yet, as John reminds us, many do not know Him.

For those who are still seeking truth, this is a call. A call to those lost in the world. A call for those to recognize that all the claims to truth, all the glimmers of wisdom, all the rays of revelation, within any-other world philosophies or religions (that the fulness of truth) is found only in Jesus. Let me say that again. All truth in the World belongs to God; but, only in Jesus do we receive the full, and the complete Truth. That only in Jesus do we have the Real Thing.

He is the heart of our Lessons and Carols.

He is the Christmas story,

Let us pray.