



Second Sunday of Christmas

In the Prologue of John (John 1:1-18), John makes the most incredible confession of faith: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” For the Semitic mind in the first century, this was an outrageous claim.

For the Jew in the first century, and today, the Word is central to God’s nature. The Word of God was God’s creative force. In Genesis, we remember that in the beginning, God created by speaking. God says; “let there be light, and there was light.” That creative word at creation is the same as the “Word” in John’s Prologue. But, John was writing to the Hellenistic community, not to a Semitic mind. John relates the creative word to the pre-eternal Jesus: Jesus becoming flesh and living amongst us since Creation.

The Prologue of John is the unique confession that God took upon God’s nature human flesh. John says that God comes and dwells with us, or the great Hebrew expression of “tenting” as the Hebrews did in the desert when they left Egypt.

God comes and lives/tents with us.

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Epiphany

On Christmas Eve, we reflected on the Incarnation icon in the Orthodox Church and we remembered the fresco at St. Gabriel’s Church in Nazareth. That icon in “one click of the camera” captured the birth of Jesus, the handmaids, the shepherds, and, of course, Mary and Joseph. Today the last scene is “written” into that icon, the wisemen and the offering of gifts.

In the Gospel for the Epiphany, Matthew (2:1-12) presents the complicated political landscape into which Jesus was born. Herod was the King, but in Matthew 2:2, a dilemma is presented to Herod when the wisemen tell Herod that they have come to see the child “born King of the Jews.” Herod’s response is that he is frightened; his power is being challenged.

And why should not Herod be frightened? For this baby presented an alternative understanding of Kingship to the people of the Judah. Throughout Jesus’ life, the tension of kingship would exist between the secular/religious authorities and the followers of the Shepherd (2:6). Today, this tension still exists between the “authorities” and the followers of Jesus.

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