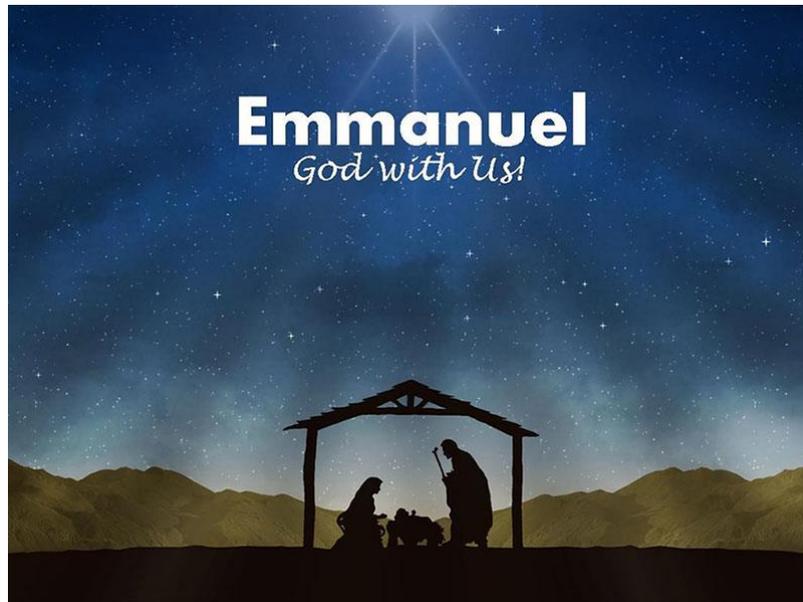




CHRISTMAS MORNING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25TH, 2020

The Lightness and the Weight of Christmas



In the Christian feast of Christmas, we celebrate God becoming human among us. The Christian church speaks of this as *God with us*: the word used “Immanuel”. There is also another metaphor for explaining the Christmas event: *God for us (pro nobis)*. It may seem pedantic to draw too much of a distinction between the two explanations, for they obviously correlate. The first, “God with us”, speaks of God who comes to share our humanity. This clearly involves a self-emptying of sorts on God’s part, a surrendering of God’s self to assume a new self. The second, “God for us” is more assertive. It is about God taking our side, God expressing a sympathy, an empathy with human life and the challenges of living.

Today, however, we go a little further. While Christmas speaks eloquently of a God who becomes human with us and for us, this very fact, compels us to ask the question, “what does it mean to be human at all”? God as human, establishes a model, Jesus is an exemplar, for what the vocation of being and becoming human means. The 20th century Catholic thinker, Karl Rahner, put it like this: “how do we come to terms with ourselves, how do we decide what is important in our living and what should be left aside”?

The incarnation when God comes among us as human, is cause to celebrate, but also reason to ask what does being and becoming human, ultimately mean.

WE GATHER

We prepare ourselves: “Benedictus” from Karl Jenkin’s “The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace” played on cello by Luka Sulic and Stjepan Hauser, June 12th, 2012, Zagreb.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtE3hoR_Nvo

Welcome

In the name of the Father

In the name of the Son

In the name of the Holy Spirit

The Lord be with

And also with you

Lighting the Advent and Christ Candles

First Reader

We light the candles of Advent:

for hope, for peace, for joy and for love.

We light the Christ candle,

the Christ who evokes all of these dimensions so necessary for living.

Second Reader

Unwelcomed child, seeker of asylum, refugee;

We welcome you

First Reader

Teacher, Healer and Saviour;

We welcome you

Second Reader

Lover of the unlovable,

Toucher of the untouchable,

Forgiver of the unforgivable;

We welcome you

Opening Hymn: Once in Royal David’s City (TiS 312, Irby, C.F. Alexander)

Prayers

God of good news
today you begin again to reshape our lives and our communities.
You start, not from the outside but from within.

You begin in a hidden place at the wrong time.

You invite a handful of guests into your company.
Shepherds, local children, perhaps some animals.
You become part of the community of
invisible people, ordinary people, forgettable people.

You begin in a hidden place at the wrong time.

Later, you find fishermen, a tax collector, more children
the small, the forgotten, the fearful.
These are the people you choose,
as little by little
you begin sharing the secrets of a kingdom
that is quite capable of changing the world.

From within. From the hidden place.

(Inspired from Advent Readings from Iona, Brian Woodcock and Jane Sutch Pickard)

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you

And also with you

We greet each other

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

“The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse”, Charles Mackesy (Harper Collins 2019): A story for children and the ‘young of heart’ about wisdom: how to live in uncertain times. This is a story that fits well for the Christmas season, when we are asked to consider the story of God becoming human among us, with the tantalizing question that follows: what does it mean to become human, to live ‘humanely’. This story of anecdotal wisdom is about both the inside and the outside, our inner-life and our broader outer-life with others. It runs extraordinary parallels with the Christian wisdom tradition but is couched in a modern way through a conversation between four characters. It is a story that merits multiple readings, each

time bringing something new to light. Here it is narrated by Fiona MacLeod.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MErGt0htYhY>

Isaiah 9:2-4a, 6-7 (Good News Translation)

이사야 9:2-4a, 6-7

This reading from the prophet Isaiah arises from a particular situation and problem. In 734BCE King Ahaz of Judah faces the threat of invasion from the northern kingdoms of Israel and Syria, who themselves face the threat of invasion from the Assyrian Empire. Ahaz has two options: to appeal to Assyrian to defend Judah or to side with Israel and Syria against the Assyrian Empire. Each has its risks. Isaiah invites Ahaz to take up third option: the bringing of religious belief into the world of real politics and national security. He urged Ahaz to not panic, to stand firm in faith (Isa. 7:3-9). This is echoed in 8:17, where the prophet speaks of his own ‘waiting’ for the Lord. The Hebrew word for ‘wait’ is the same as the word for ‘hope’

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
They lived in a land of shadows,
but now light is shining on them.
³ You have given them great joy,^[a] Lord
⁴ For you have broken the yoke that burdened
them
and the rod that beat their shoulders.
⁶ A child is born to us!
A son is given to us!
And he will be our ruler.
He will be called, “Wonderful^[b] Counsellor,”
“Mighty God,” “Eternal Father,”
“Prince of Peace.”
⁷ His royal power will continue to grow;
his kingdom will always be at peace.
He will rule as King David's successor,
basing his power on right and justice,
from now until the end of time.
The LORD Almighty is determined to do all
this.

The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

2 흑암에 행하던 백성이 큰
빛을 보고 사망의 그늘진
땅에 거주하던 자에게 빛이
비치도다
3 주께서 이 나라를 창성하게
하시며 그 즐거움을 더하게
하셨으므로 추수하는
즐거움과 탈취물을 나눌
때의 즐거움 같이 그들이 주
앞에서 즐거워하오니
4 이는 그들이 무겁게 멘
 멩에와 그들의 어깨의
채찍과 그 압제자의
막대기를 주께서
꺾으시오니,
6 이는 한 아기가 우리에게
났고 한 아들을 우리에게
주신 바 되었는데 그의
어깨에는 정사를 메었고
그의 이름은 기묘자라,
모사라, 전능하신
하나님이라, 영존하시는
아버지라, 평강의 왕이라 할
것임이라
7 그 정사와 평강의 더함이
무궁하며 또 다윗의 왕좌와
그의 나라에 군림하여 그
나라를 굳게 세우고 지금
이후로 영원히 정의와
공의로 그것을 보존하실

것이라 만군의 여호와의
열심이 이를 이루시리라

이것은 주님의 말씀입니다.
주님께 감사를 드립니다.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke - The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-20:

누가복음 2:1-20

Behind the romance of the “stable suite” of the modern Christmas card, stands Luke’s story of simplicity, real poverty, and dissent. The characters in this story cry out for liberation and peace, in their protest against the claims of Rome, which sees itself as the peace bringer. In this story, Luke has us stumble over the lies of Roman pretence. Here is a different sort of peace, a different sort of ‘Son of God’ who challenges the pretence of the politicians.

2¹⁻⁵ About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So, Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David’s town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

6-7 While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

8-12 There were shepherds camping in the neighbourhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God’s angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Saviour has just been born in David’s town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.”

13-14 At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God’s praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

15-18 As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.” They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they

met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed.

19-20 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

- 1 그 때에 가이사 아구스도가 영을 내려 천하로 다 호적하라 하였으니
- 2 이 호적은 구레노가 수리아 총독이 되었을 때에 처음 한 것이라
- 3 모든 사람이 호적하러 각각 고향으로 돌아가매
- 4 요셉도 다윗의 집 족속이므로 갈릴리 나사렛 동네에서 유대를 향하여 베들레헴이라 하는 다윗의 동네로
- 5 그 약혼한 마리아와 함께 호적하러 올라가니 마리아가 이미 잉태하였더라
- 6 거기 있을 그 때에 해산할 날이 차서
- 7 첫아들을 낳아 강보로 싸서 구유에 누웠으니 이는 여관에 있을 곳이 없음이러라
- 8 그 지역에 목자들이 밤에 밖에서 자기 양 떼를 지키더니
- 9 주의 사자가 곁에 서고 주의 영광이 그들을 두루 비추매 크게 무서워하는지라
- 10 천사가 이르되 무서워하지 말라 보라 내가 온 백성에게 미칠 큰 기쁨의 좋은 소식을 너희에게 전하노라
- 11 오늘 다윗의 동네에 너희를 위하여 구주가 나셨으니 곧 그리스도 주시니라
- 12 너희가 가서 강보에 싸여 구유에 누어 있는 아기를 보리니 이것이 너희에게 표적이니라 하더니
- 13 홀연히 수많은 천군이 그 천사들과 함께 하나님을 찬송하여 이르되
- 14 지극히 높은 곳에서는 하나님께 영광이요 땅에서는 하나님이 기뻐하신 사람들 중에 평화로다 하니라
- 15 천사들이 떠나 하늘로 올라가니 목자가 서로 말하되 이제 베들레헴으로 가서 주께서 우리에게 알리신 바 이 이루어진 일을 보자 하고
- 16 빨리 가서 마리아와 요셉과 구유에 누인 아기를 찾아서
- 17 보고 천사가 자기들에게 이 아기에 대하여 말한 것을 전하니
- 18 듣는 자가 다 목자들이 그들에게 말한 것들을 놀랍게 여기되
- 19 마리아는 이 모든 말을 마음에 새기어 생각하니라
- 20 목자들은 자기들에게 이르던 바와 같이 듣고 본 그 모든 것으로 인하여 하나님께 영광을 돌리고 찬송하며 돌아가니라

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

주님의 복음입니다.
그리스도이신 주님을 찬양합니다.

For Meditation: Hark the Herald Angels Sing (TiS 303, Mendelssohn, C. Wesley)

Some thoughts...a Conversation

Prayers for the World

This prayer for others takes the form of a prayer of confession, as we acknowledge human and social failing. After each petition, the one who prays ends with the words, “*Help us to build a new world from the bottom-up, from the outside-in*” to which we reply, “*Lord hear us*”)

Lord God we celebrate the genius of the human species
and the beauty of the world within which we live.
We acknowledge our creative role through history,
and our humanity locked up in anxiety and fear which leads to over-reach;
Help us to build a new world from the bottom-up, from the outside-in;
Lord hear us

We acknowledge our struggle for wisdom, which once attained,
we use to dominate and oppress,
rather than serve the common good, the good of all.
We confess our weakness for power,
reflected in our ‘natural’ tendency to look for you
among the elites rather than among the poor;
Help us to build a new world from the bottom-up, from the outside-in;
Lord hear us

We admit our tribalism,
our acceptance of groupie-ness,
defining ourselves through who we are not:
Help us to build a new world from the bottom-up, from the outside-in:
Lord hear us

We confess our preoccupation with self-interest,
the lens through which we habitually look at the world
and our relationships with others;
Help us to build a new world from the bottom-up, from the outside-in:
Lord hear us

Let us pray together:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을
받으시옵며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.

*as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever.
Amen.*

오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을
주옵시고
우리가 우리에게 죄 지은 자를
사하여 준 것같이
우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
우리를 시험에 들게 하지
마옵시고
다만 악에서 구하옵소서
대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다.
아멘

Some Gifts for the Young among Us: The story that we read earlier, “The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse”. These will be handed to them once we can congregate again.

Giving: the Christmas Bowl for the people of Zimbabwe.

Today, Christmas Morning, we are asked to respond to the people of Zimbabwe. In this clip, we listen to Newton Mapanzure, Project Assistant for Christian Care, who partner in that country with Act for Peace.

https://www.actforpeace.org.au/www_AFP/media/Christmas-Bowl/CB20-Resources/CB20-06-ChristmasDay.mp4

Dressing the Tree

We suggest that today, you might dress your own Christmas at home with symbols that speak of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you may like to make some and then hang them.

Hymn: O Come All Ye Faithful (TIS 304, Adeste fidelis, John Francis Wade)

Blessing

You have come to us as a small child,
but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts,
and you invite us “to come to terms with ourselves”.
Caress us with Your tiny hands,
embrace us with Your tiny arms
Make us divine

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ
Amen

Handel's Hallelujah Chorus (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Virtual Choir Feat, from St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne), 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGeKWWoL9Xg>