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Stamford, CT  
Christmas Day 2010 Year A

Merry Christmas!

*.....The spiritual reality is this:- The Logos became flesh and dwelt among us ---  
connecting us to GOD for all time and in each moment of time and space....*

Merry Christmas! We can finally say it! Christmas is here! Christ is born in a humble stable in Bethlehem, and we sing Alleluia!

And here, on the broad step of the sanctuary, is the Crèche. And here in the Crèche are Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, with angels, and shepherds and animals in the stable in Bethlehem. The Crèche will stay here until Epiphany “waiting” for the Wise Men to make their journey to see the Christ child. But if you came to this Christmas Day Service expecting readings that would mention Bethlehem, or the shepherds, or the angels, or Mary or Joseph, you were disappointed. This service does include a few Christmas hymns, but it is only later in the Christmas Season that we will have a Service of Lessons and Carols.

This Christmas Day Gospel reading, from John, takes us out of the familiar Christmas story, the everyday world of the stable and the angels and Mary and Joseph, and places us at the foot of the Almighty God, unknowable, indescribable, mighty in power and glory, too wonderful for us humans to behold face to face! (Remember what happened to Moses when he saw God face to face? His face was all shiny and he didn't wish to do that again!)

Today's Gospel takes us straight to God, God who is greater than Creation! The physicist and Anglican theologian, John Polkinghorne, tells us that today's science, for all its discoveries and for all its theories and breakthroughs, confirms that God is there. For wherever we look, whatever we discover, God's imprint is there: in the order, the predictability, and the very structure of all Creation. Polkinghorne confirms that science operates on one level of reality: material. Science does not have the tools to operate on the other level of reality, which is spiritual. Polkinghorne is a scientist – but he is also theologian. And theologians work on new ways to describe God.

Theologians work on the premise that if our idea of God does not allow for discoveries that science makes, or for experiences that we have, then it is our

idea of God that is too limited. If we can't describe God sufficiently broadly, then it is because our language is limited. Our perceptions -as human beings - are limited. It is the work of theologians to expand our perceptions to see God more clearly and fully- on a spiritual level.

The material level of reality is where we live every day. It's the daily grind. And families. And chores. And entertaining. And celebrating Christmas with gifts. It's a child born in a stable in Bethlehem. It's the morning after Jesus' birth: the cold gray sky (if you're in the Northern hemisphere), the opened presents, the visits to relatives and friends. It's the morning after Tiny Tim's Christmas dinner all warm and fuzzy with Scrooge as the unexpected guest. And its back to work and school after the "Holidays."

But today's Gospel takes us to the other level of reality: the spiritual level of reality. And John, who is a theologian, tells us how God breaks into Creation, into time, into our material existence, once - for all time, for all eternity: "In the beginning was the Word...."

"Word" is a translation of the Greek "Logos." "Logos" is a term from Greek philosophy. It means divine reason, or divine plan. The Gospel writer was no doubt aware that this word, "Logos" also means "Wisdom." In the Hebrew Scripture, the Old Testament, Wisdom is associated with Yaweh - God. Wisdom is more than an attribute of God; Wisdom has its own character and power. Wisdom is loving. Wisdom is just and ethical. Wisdom was with God from the beginning, before Creation.

In choosing this word Logos, then, Gospel writer describes a dynamic - spiritual presence. Logos describes a Spiritual life, with power and wisdom and love. It is this "Logos" that is "made flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a Fathers only Son, full of grace and truth." As St Paul tells us in the Letter to the Hebrews "He -(Jesus) -is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being...."

Today's Gospel tells the story of Jesus' birth in spiritual terms. It is the story of God's breaking into our time - into our material level of reality. This story has none of the fanfare that we can recognize with our senses. It is the morning after. The angels with their singing and light are gone. Even the shepherds are back out in the fields. Life in goes on. Time moves on.

But this is a spiritual story! Everything is different now! If we can just open our hearts to this spiritual level of reality!

The spiritual reality is this:- The Logos became flesh and dwelt among us --- connecting us to GOD for all time and in each moment. Through Jesus, eternal God is present for us in every instant and in every place. There is no place that God is not. There is no time that God is not. As far as we can see or discover in geography, God is there. Even looking through telescopes beyond galaxies, God is there. And in the smallest particles, God is already there.

Jesus is Emmanuel. "God is with us." That is the spiritual reality! That is the story of Christmas!

Thanks be to God!  
Merry Christmas!  
Amen.