



## From A Bishop's Journal (624)

### The Word Became Flesh

**O**n the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the promulgation by Vatican Council II of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, I am pleased to offer you for Christmas 2005, a song I composed with Father Renaud Côté, C.J.M., and that the Alpec Centre has chosen for its new selection of songs.

#### The Word of God

What our eyes have seen,  
What we have heard,  
And what we have touched,  
We declare to be the Word of God.

He who stands among us  
And who makes himself one with us;  
He who lives among us,  
We believe: He is the Word of God.

He who shall come in glory  
To make us his blessed;  
He whom we shall see in the heavens,  
We await him: it is the Word of God,  
Jesus Christ, the Lord.

#### Complete Joy

Saint John speaks to us of the Word of God at the very beginning of his Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was in God and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory: the glory of an only Son coming from the Father, full of grace and truth.” This Gospel used to be read at the end of every mass to remind us of the great mystery of the Incarnation in the midst of humankind. And the Angelus itself, the traditional noon prayer, repeats this Good News of our salvation. In his first Letter, Saint John expands on the mystery: “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, and

what we have looked upon and our hands have touched – we speak of the Word of life. This life became visible, we have seen and bear witness to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was present to the Father and became visible to us. What we have seen and heard we proclaim in turn to you so that you may share life with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, our purpose in writing you this is that our joy may be complete.” What depth, in John’s thinking, and what a testimony! He is fond of talking about this great initiative of God: “See the great love which the Father has given us, to be called children of God, for so indeed we are.”

## **Revelation of God**

According to *Dei Verbum*, Vatican II solemnly states that “it pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will, which was that people can draw near to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine nature. By this revelation, then, the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men and women as his friends, and lives among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company... The most intimate truth thus revealed about God and human salvation shines forth for us in Christ, who is himself both the mediator and the sum total of revelation.”<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI stated in November that this Constitution renewed our sense of the value of the Word of God, bringing with it a deep renewal to the life of the Church, especially in homiletics, catechesis, theology, spirituality, and ecumenical dialogue. The text of the Constitution is very dense, but it summarises, we might say, God’s grand adventure in the midst of humankind: in his love, God shows himself to all humanity. At Christmastime, it is good to recall this great mystery. Christmas of love! It is good to welcome this news in the deepest recesses of our hearts: it is the greatest secret ever given to us!

## **Becoming “Bird”**

When I was the provincial superior of the North American Eudists I heard praises about a homily given by Father Raymond Melanson to his parishioners, at Christmas. I asked him for a copy of the homily, but he answered that it was very short: “There was a child who wanted to get close to the birds but every time he tried to do so, the birds would fly off. He tried to entice them with food, but could get nowhere. So he decided, ‘If I could be a bird, I would no longer scare them away and they would accept me as one of theirs...’ Well, Christmas is something like that: God does not want to scare us away, so he became one like us.” “God so loved the world that he sent his only Son into the world.”

## **God Made Visible**

In the eucharistic preface for Christmas, we proclaim this wonderful truth: “In the wonder of the incarnation your eternal Word has brought to the eyes of faith a new and radiant vision of your glory. In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see. Christ

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<sup>1</sup>Austin Flannery, O.P., Gen. Ed., *Vatican Council II Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations... in Inclusive Language*. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1996, p.97-98.

is your Son before all ages, yet now he is born in time. He has come to lift up all things to himself, to restore unity to creation, and to lead mankind from exile into your heavenly kingdom.” Merry Christmas 2005! Happy and Holy New Year 2006!

+ *François Thibodeau*

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