



Christian Education

A series of Sermons and Occasional Papers
From the clergy and members
of Holy Trinity Church
Forbes Park, Makati

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Title: **"Word"**

Comment: Insert Comment here

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Readings for this Sunday:

First Reading Isaiah 52:7-10

Second Reading Hebrews 1:1-12

Gospel Luke 2:1-14

Christmas morning isn't really the time for the study of Scripture, but one really can't beat the Bible for telling us what the meaning of Christmas is supposed to be. Still, one must be selective.

While pursuing my study of the Old Testament, I recently came across this passage hidden in the book of the prophet Jeremiah:

For the customs of the peoples are false:

A tree from the forest is cut down,

And worked with an axe by the hands of an artisan;

People deck it with silver and gold;

They fashion it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move.

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This sure sounded to me like a specific attack on the Christmas tree! Now I'm sure that few people are tempted to actually worship their trees, but even so, you will notice that that passage is seldom if ever used at this time of year.

More significant is perhaps the passage that, in our Anglican past, used to be the Gospel appointed for Christmas Day. This wasn't the familiar story about angels and shepherds, nor even about the wise men, but rather the strange and wonderful "Preface" of the Gospel of John that speaks about "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God."

We who are of the "IT" age are familiar with "Word." If you're not, you probably won't get a whole lot done on your computer. It is the "open sesame" for all kinds of operations, at least on my PC. This is not the Word that is being spoken about in John's Gospel, but it at least opens up the imagination more than what the concept of "word" as a few shapes on a printed page. John chose the idea of "Word" to describe Jesus because philosophers had been dealing with it for a long time- it was already well-known as a way to describe an idea taking form outside of the thinker. For the evangelist, that was an excellent way to describe Jesus Christ as proceeding from God the Father and becoming on earth the specific expression of divinity.

When John further tells us, then, "the Word was made flesh," we are right where we find ourselves this morning- celebrating the Incarnation. It's not just the birth of any child that we observe here, any more than it is some vague "Peace on Earth" that we all know too

well is elusive at best and a cynical take on the carnage of the nightly news at worst. No, indeed, "the Word was made flesh" was only a beginning of what was to be the transformation of the human race- a transformation that is still underway.

Let our prayer today be not for more nostalgia or fantasy this Christmas, but for a deeper appreciation of what it meant for God to join the human race this way, and what it means for us that we have so far fallen so far from the potential it offered. There is still a chance, thanks be to God.