

Christmas Day
Year C - December 25th, 2018 - 10am

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4
John 1:1-14

In the name of the Trinity; Creator, Redeemer, and Life-Giver...

The Advent wreath that you see in our church has been burning throughout Advent, the season that leads us to this celebration of Christmas. Each week we have lit another candle, each candle signifying a different theme, as we have prepared ourselves for the coming of Christ among us, born in humility, born in the manger.

Christmas celebrates our creator God's action in human affairs to give a different future, one of peace, reconciliation and hope. These are words that can all too easily slip from our tongues in ways that indicate our *willingness* to change, but all too often are left as ideals, or hopes, rather than be transformed into concrete actions.

In the events of Christmas, we understand that God placed such a high price on these qualities that there was simply no other way to show us how to love, how to be peaceful, and how to be merciful than for God to be born among us, and to live a fully human life.

Christians understand that the birth of Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promise to renew our relationship with God. St. Paul put it best, in his letter to the Corinthians, when he writes "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." Even at his birth Jesus serves to bring together even those who in that time and place were considered outsiders, people like poor shepherds watching their flocks or eastern, Gentile monarchs.

God reconciles the world to himself by becoming one of us. The divine became human. God entered history. Eternity became part of time.

God was reconciling the world to himself by actually living it. In Jesus, God came among us to show us the way, to be reconciled with the God who has created us all and everything that is. And God has likewise come in the person of Jesus, to show us how to be reconciled with each other, as children of the one God who is the Creator of us all. That's the story behind Christmas.

Christmas tells us about the unfolding of God's promise then and now. It tells us about the direction of God's working amongst people. And it challenges our imaginations as we look at the world.

Australians of every background can find good reason to be dismayed about contemporary events near and far. Even here in Australia, in a land richly blessed in so many ways, there is widespread mistrust and dissatisfaction, and more suffering than there should be. Curiously, this is so when we have a greater ability than ever before to actually address the domestic problems that afflict us.

What we lack, it seems to me, is the will and the drive to confront the issues that relegate some to a life of limited participation and flourishing. Conflict is part of the human condition, seemingly more today than ever. But Jesus' birth points us all to a different reality. His birth reveals a power to change and transform that is greater than ourselves. What God gives to the world in the baby of Bethlehem is a promise and a hope that even in the worst of times the best of who we are created to be can find its fulfilment.

The baby of Bethlehem reveals the glory of God and seeks to bring to God's people a light to enlighten all those who live apart from God. Jesus is the one sent from God to change human existence one person at a time and for all of us together.

This happens as we, each one of us, are changed by this revelation of God - the eternal Word of God (as the Gospel writer, John, describes Jesus) born into human form. And as we are changed, we join in God's work, that work of bringing hope, peace, joy, and love into the lives of those around us and into the world.

As we ponder this most remarkable feast, let us consider how God, born among us, offers us the chance for true reconciliation. How we are called, through Christ, to forgive others, to forgive ourselves, and be made one again with our Creator God.

To you, and to your families and your loved ones I extend the blessing of the Word made Flesh - may Christ be born anew in you, and his light guide you in your lives ahead.

In the name of God. Amen