

The Prologue to Gospel of John (John 1:1-18)

Today's Gospel, the Prologue to the Gospel of John, has always held a unique place in Christian thought. For centuries this passage was read at the end of every mass, presenting in beautiful poetic language, the most profound synopsis of our redemption. Beautiful though the language of the prologue is, it is also complex and dense with meaning.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1) What does this mean? John here uses the language of the book of Genesis but is reaching much further back. John is reaching beyond Creation and beyond time itself. He is reaching into a time before time, into Eternity and the very nature of God's Being.

Who is the 'Word' that John speaks of? The 'Word' that is with God, and therefore distinct, yet is God, and therefore a unity. This 'Word' is no other than the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The 'Word' is the 'Only Begotten Son' of the God, existing Co-Eternal and Co-Equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It was through the power of the 'Word' that the Father created all that has been or ever would be. 'Not one thing had its being but through him' (John 1:3).

St Paul teaches that “ ... in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible... He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:15-17)

God however was not satisfied with simply creating. God desired much more than this. God desired to extend his family to incorporate humanity, and to share his life and his love with us. “He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (Eph 1: 5-6).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that, “... the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.” Might become “partakers of the divine nature” (CCC 460).

God longed to share his life with us, and knowing the we were powerless to do this by our own power, “...The Son of God assumed our nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it” (CCC 461). Again St. Paul puts it beautifully, “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col 1:19-20).

The baby Jesus, whom we adore during this Christmas season, is that Eternal ‘Word’ made flesh. As God, he had been the mediator of Creation itself, and as the ‘God-Man’ he became for us the mediator of our salvation (1:14; 3:17).

The baby Jesus is the light that shatters the darkness of this world and gives us, “power to become children of God” (1 John 1:12)...Come let us adore him!