## **CHRISTMAS DAY HOMILY 2016**

Isaiah 52: 7-10 + Hebrews 1: 1-6 + John 1: 1-18 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. (Spanish): Holy Spirit Catholic Church

We are a people who are bombarded by a torrent of words every day. Words wash over us from TV screens blaring 24 hour news. Words ping for our attention from text messages and e-mails. So many words that we can fail to hear the One Word necessary, the Word who saves.

The Word of God, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Divine Trinity, through whom God the Father creates all things and has given life to all things, speaks to us.

The Word becomes flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, choosing to dwell among us, to pitch his tent right-smack-dab in the middle of our messy human existence.

The Eternal Word becomes a word spoken in time, in the limits of human life, one life, the life of Jesus, Son of Mary, Son of God.

And so God arrives among us, shivering in the cold, howling with hunger, begging with each breath to be fed and clothed and sheltered.

God's desire is so great to communicate to us His saving love, that God, through God's only begotten Son, becomes just like us. So we can understand what God is constantly saying,

whether in the dark of night or the light of day.

A simple yet profound message coming to us so many mysterious and varied ways--- I LOVE YOU!

By the Word taking our flesh, the song of God's love for all God's Creation reaches a crescendo.

No longer will God communicate with humankind in partial ways through the prophets. Now God speaks fully and clearly and directly and intimately to us through Jesus, the Word made flesh.

The One who sustains all things by his mighty word, who is the bright brilliance of the Father's glory, who reveals the Father in everything he says and does, has become one with us.

In order to tell us clearly, by his life and death and resurrection and ascension into glory, of God's enduring love for wayward humankind, of God's everlasting love for fickle humankind, of God's saving love for lost humankind.

Sadly, too many of us are deaf to the Eternal Word of Love spoken to us in Jesus. Too many of us fail to hear of our divine dignity as God's beloved children through Jesus His beloved Son.

Which is why struggle and suffering are such essential ingredients of human life. Anything which causes us to question our self-sufficiency has the potential to turn us toward the One who is our saving strength. Anything which causes us to question our control has the capacity to turn us toward the One who holds our destiny and the destiny of the world in His hands. Anything which shakes us out of our unexamined self-satisfaction, which turns our life upside down and makes us hunger for something more than shallow pleasures, has the potential to turn us toward the One who satisfies our deepest hunger, our hunger for God.

It is anything and everything which humbles us, which brings us to our knees, that can be a gift to make clear our dependence on God, whose Word of Love sustains our life at each instant.

It is exactly this dependence which helps us recognize the glorious gift we are receiving in Jesus Christ.

When we are in touch with our own flaws, limitations, and mistakes we can then be grasped by the One who is God's very hand extended to us. When we are deeply aware of our sins and the slavery in which we live to our sins, then we can rejoice in the salvation we find only in Jesus, whose very name means, "God saves."

God's generosity is more than we can ever expect or even think we deserve. By the saving birth of God's Son, the Father of all raises us up to be His heirs, when we, like the prodigal sons, would simply settle for being servants.

For the Son of God becomes human so that we humans might become sons and daughters of God.

From the fullness of the Word made flesh we have received and continue to receive grace in place of grace, grace that heals our wounded souls and tortured hearts, grace which brings us new life in Him.

One of the reasons we celebrate the birth of the Son of God, the Word made flesh, every year is to remember that the Eternal God hungers to communicate with us.

The Eternal God longs with a longing beyond all telling to converse with us, so we can share in the glory of his life and love.

As the divine potter, God has fashioned us out of the clay of this earth, breathing into us the breath of His life, imprinting the divine image upon each and every one of us. God has created us to carry on an eternal conversation with God.

What would we give to have such power to create a friend to our taste and with the breath of our own life, to make the friend able to understand us and be understood by us, and converse intimately---heart to heart—to know our friend as truly "another self."

This is what God has done; human beings are God's other self.

For God has not only created us so, but also by descending from heaven and taking our flesh has raised us up in Jesus into this divine friendship. In Jesus, the fully human one, we discover our dignity as God's other self. By leaping down from heaven in the dark of the night, the Light of the World has lifted us up to our divine destiny, so that He, the Word made flesh, can speak with us.

So that He, the everlasting Word of God's love, can share His joys with us, His generosity, His grandeur, the fullness of His divine life.

By our creation and by our redemption, we are God's other self.

The ongoing conversation we have with God in Christ reaches a high point every time we come to this sacred table.

Gathered around this table, we hear clearly of God's saving love for us in Jesus.

Coming to this table, we taste God communicating with us, feeding us with the body and blood of His own beloved Son.

The message is clear. In God's eyes, we are a glory to behold. God delights in us. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us; it is in Everyone!

Knowing this, we can hear the unending and all-sustaining Word, crying out in need, or hear the Light of the World pleading for light, for warmth, for food and shelter.

The Word came to dwell among us, that we might be a word spoken, a voice for those in need, a light to the nations. Children of God, in fire with divine love.

Fr. Joseph A. Jacobi