

Reflection - God's Word...

Rev Reg Weeks – St Ronan's Church

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*God speaks, and the universe is created...
galaxies and giant nebula come into being...
black holes, cosmic gases, suns and stars...
all the elements that make for life...*

*God speaks, and an untouched Hebrew girl conceives a child...
and this child will become a light for all nations...
The light that shines in the darkness, promised by the prophets.
God has spoken and God's very Word becomes grace and truth in the flesh - Jesus
is born.*

In our gospel reading set down for Christmas day, John the theologian helps us to understand that the anointed one, the holy one, who enters our humanity in Jesus is the very same Word, (capital W) through whom the whole universe was spoken into being.

And because of this incarnation, this 'enfleshment' of God's Word in a child born in Bethlehem, a relationship of intimacy is made possible between God and all humanity.

God's true nature and God's purposes are to be made clear in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. And all that we endure as fragile creatures will be endured by God.
“...to all who receive him, who believe in his name, he gave the ability to become the children of God.”

Where people have walked in darkness and misunderstanding, now there's a walking, talking, human expression of God's will for humanity.

And this child, born in a manger, would show us by his life, and by his death-speaking-forgiveness on the cross - he would show us just how God's purposes of peace, with justice - God's Shalom, God's *waiora* (health, soundness) - is to be achieved for all people. Speaking forgiveness, not retaliating, not revenging - even in the face of his enemies.

And by his life he would teach us: love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; pray for those who persecute you; make peace; show mercy; be humble; travel light; share what you have, to feed the hungry and care for the sick; let the oppressed go free.

Men and women living in the deadly darkness of fear and exploitation, abuse and slavery, can now see by the light of Jesus' life and teaching, the good news that God desires their well-being, not their punishment.

Men and women wallowing in the toxic gloom of pride and greed and envy, men and women dwelling in the wasteland of cynicism, or the exile of everlasting resentment - well they can now see by Jesus' light that there is another way; the way of self-

emptying love where they can find true fullness of life. The way Jesus showed us how to live.

And in his teaching, Jesus would announce that what he called the kingdom of God, was at hand, wherever he was and wherever that kind of love was manifest. We would see, not Caesar's occupation of Israel, or any other power's occupation of any other country, but love's occupation of the whole earth.

Jesus would demonstrate, and call his followers to demonstrate, call you and me to demonstrate, that the loving purposes of God won't be defeated by the worst humanity can do.

So, dare we ask on this Christmas Day, as we celebrate the birth of the one who reveals the good news of God's love to the world - dare we ask ourselves just how well we shine the light of God's love into the dark places of our community, our families, and even the dark places of our own hearts.

The revelation of God arrived in a human baby, tiny, vulnerable, without protection, food or shelter, except what his parents could provide. An infant citizen of a nation occupied by force and by fear.

This child would grow to understand that his calling was to do what Israel failed to do; to shine the light of God's justice and peace, God's mercy and forgiveness, even to their enemies and oppressors...

This child would die speaking forgiveness, rather than retaliate.

But that was not the end. By the power of God's Spirit, the Word made flesh would be raised, and he would call his followers to take the light of God's love to the ends of the earth.

And here we are, at the ends of the earth...!

God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth and to everyone who believed in his name, as Scripture says, he gave the power to be called the children of God.