

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W6 4BB**

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2nd Sunday of Christmas – 3rd January 2021

REFLECTION

As we continue to ponder the mystery of Christmas – God becoming a human being among us in Jesus – the readings today bring us to reflect on who the child lying in the manger is. Two related images are given to us, the Word and Wisdom of God. To say that this Child Jesus is the Word and Wisdom of God is a simple yet profound statement.

We all use words to speak. And we speak out what we have thought through (at least that is where our words are supposed to proceed from). In somewhat similar way, 2000 years ago God, who is eternal, spoke His Word in time and the power of His Word was such that it became a person. Of course God's Word, being a manifestation of his thought, was always with Him from eternity. Creation, as is recounted for us in the book of Genesis, was carried out by God through His Word. In other words creation itself is a manifestation of the wisdom of God, as the Poet Hopkins says, "The world is alight with the grandeur of God". St John tells us that the same Word through whom God created the world, who was always with God, was spoken into the world with such power that it became a Person and the Word dwelt among us. This is the little Child of Mary and Joseph born in Bethlehem. What a mystery!

God so much gives Himself that He was not content with creating the world but wanted to be in the world. Therefore His Word became flesh in order that He might dwell in the world. We learn from the letter to the Hebrews (2:17) that not only did the Word of God become human but He came as the humblest of humans: He had to become as we are, experiencing our difficulties and suffering in order that he might appropriately represent us before God. Because Jesus has done this, we have full access to God. "From his fulness we have, all of us, received – yes grace in return for grace". How marvellous! In other words, what we celebrate at Christmas is the complete outpouring of God's grace, the magnanimity of God who chose us to become his adopted children through His Son Jesus Christ, our brother.

St John describes the Word of God as the true light that enlightens all people. In the Old Testament times God's word was given to Israel through Moses in the form of the Torah (the Law). It was the true presence of God among the Israelites and they felt special to be chosen by God to make His dwelling. Israel was guided by the Torah (the Law) as by the light but Israel's Law was only applicable to Israel alone. Moreover, neither the Law nor the Temple sacrifices provided by the Law through which Israel expressed their relationship with God provided them a full access to God. Jesus, the Word of God, not only enlightens us – that is, allows us to grasp the truth about God – but grants us direct access to God. Now the light who is Christ is available not only to a chosen people but to anyone who accepts Jesus – to that person Jesus gives power to become a child of God. What a privilege!

This wonderful mystery, dear friends, is the joy we celebrate. We will continue over these weeks of Christmas to tease out the implications of Christmas by reflecting on the nature of Jesus, God-made-man, born for us. The fact that we are the children of God is huge. It not only forms our identity but also grants us huge privileges. God is with us in all our situation. We

face the difficulties in our world, in our families and relationships as the children of God, knowing that if God allowed His own Son to suffer for an infinitely good cause – to unite us with Him – then our own troubles are not for nothing. They are for a good cause although yet unknown to us. Jesus the true light is here to guide us by that light into the truth of our identity and the destiny which Our Father has mapped out for us through the various events of our lives.

NOTICES

Church Opening and Mass Times Return to Normal

Although we are in Tier 4, common worship is permitted. Therefore our church remains open at the advertised times:

Monday to Saturday: 7.45 - 9.00am, 11.30am – 1.00pm and 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Sundays: 7.45 - 9.00am, 11.30am – 1.00pm and 4.30 – 6.45pm

Mass times: Monday to Saturday 8.00am, 12.15pm and 6.00pm
Sundays 8.30am, 10.00am, 12.15pm and 6.00pm

Healing Mass is held on the first Saturday of the month at 12.15pm

All Masses are open for anyone to attend. No prior booking is required.

Confession times:

Monday to Friday: 5.40pm – 6.00pm

Saturdays: 11.30am -12.15pm and 5.00pm – 6.00pm

Obituary Announcement

Phyllis Comerford who used to attend mass in our church has passed on. We ask you to pray for the repose of her soul.

Gratitude

The Carmelite Community thanks all of you for your generous gifts during the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Be assured that we will continue to pray for each one of you and we wish you every blessing in this new year 2021.

<u>Collections Last Sunday</u>	Offering	£480
	Gift Aid	£130

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD

Registered Charity No: 253645