



JESUS THE LIGHT AND LIFE OF ALL

Sermon | John 1:1-14 | Christmas Day



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Jesus, the Light and the Life of All

In the name of the incarnate Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light who shines in the darkness, grace and peace be with you. Amen.

This morning's sermon focusses on the reading from the Gospel according to John. Let us pray:

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing to You, O Lord, my God and my Redeemer. **Amen.**

Apostle John's account of the Gospel of Christ stands apart from the other three synoptic Gospels, namely Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Today's text that from John's Gospel is a clear example of that distinction, as John weaves together a profound tapestry of Jesus' incarnation, proclaiming it with remarkable depth.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and greet one another with “*Merry Christmas,*” today’s Gospel text draws us to the very heart of our faith. To the *unchurched*, “*Merry Christmas*” may be nothing more than a pleasant seasonal phrase.

But for you, dear saints, it is far more than a custom—it is a confession of our one true faith.

The opening verse of today’s Gospel text proclaims that the One who was ‘*in the beginning*’ must necessarily have existed before the beginning itself. As John writes: “*In the beginning was the Word...*” (John 1:1).

And the One who was ‘*in the beginning*’ is not bound by time or space; therefore, ‘the Word’ who was in the beginning means, *nothing* other than it *always was*.

In simple terms the One who existed even *before* the beginning is *eternal*—without *origin*.

Therefore, the One who was before all things must be none other than the One true God.

And yet John speaks of another person, for he calls Him “the Word.” John invites his readers to behold the *mystery* of the incarnation. This is why he further writes, “*the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (John 1:1).

This is our one true faith—Jesus is true God.

John goes on to write, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14).

This is our one true faith—Jesus is true Man.

And the fullness of our confession is this: *Jesus is true God and true Man*, two natures united in one person.

Now, we know that it is not easy for our human reason to grasp.

Many throughout history have stumbled in trying to explain this mystery and have fallen into heresy. And just so *you* can recall who a heretic is, “*a heretic is one who holds to a teaching at odds with the doctrine handed down to us in the Church.*”

- Those who deny Jesus’ true divinity—who claim He is *only* a man—*also* end up denying His real presence in the Holy Communion.
- And those who deny Jesus’ true humanity—who claim He is *only* God—undermine His bodily atonement on the cross.

So, when you greet someone with “*Merry Christmas,*” remember that *you* are confessing that Christ—*true God*—took upon Himself *our* human nature and was born for *you*. And that Christ—*true Man*—offered Himself on the cross to die for *you* and deliver *you*.

However, many in the world struggle to understand this confession. And it is also true for us, for there are times when our sinful selves begin to tug at us with strands of doubt.

To help us picture this mystery, I want *you* to recall the burning bush from the book of Exodus. When Moses saw the bush burning yet not consumed, he must have felt a mix of emotions.

The bush was engulfed in flames, and yet it remained unharmed. Moses would have been filled with awe, fear, reverence, or even curiosity.

Then God spoke to Moses from the midst of the bush. He was commanded to remove his sandals, for he was standing on holy ground.

Moses was in a sacred place, in the presence of the Holy One. For God alone is holy.

This scene preaches to us a picture of how the divine and the human natures in Christ are joined together in one person.

The bush remained a bush, and the fire remained fire. Yet the fire did not consume the bush. Likewise, Christ's divine nature remains truly divine, and His human nature remains truly human.

Yet the two natures are united in the one person of Christ. Just as the bush was not harmed by the raging fire but was preserved, so the divine nature does not destroy the human nature in Christ.

Now there is another mystery in the scene of the burning bush—one that brings even greater clarity. When Moses approached the bush, he not only heard God speaking to him, but also saw a figure in the flame of fire.

I will let Moses tell us whom he encountered in the burning bush. So let us read from the book of Exodus, chapter 3.

“Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God

of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.” (Exodus 3:1-6)

Here ends the reading.

So, who did Moses see in the bush burning yet not consumed?

The Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush.

Scripture records many instances of God’s angels appearing to men, women, and even animals.

However, this Angel of the Lord was none other than the pre-incarnate Jesus.

This truth is affirmed and confessed by many of the Church Fathers.

Justin Martyr, a second-century Church Father had a debate with a Jewish scholar Trypho.

This debate is translated in English language and available freely online.

In his "*Dialogue with Trypho*," Justin demonstrates it to Trypho from the books of Exodus and Genesis that the Angel of the Lord was none other than pre-incarnate Christ.

This is precisely why John continues in verses 2 and 3, "*The Word was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.*" (John 1:2-3)

Dear saints, may God grant us joy and peace and comfort as we meditate on this great mystery, that God is with us in the flesh to be our Saviour.

Jesus is truly with us in this Divine Service, serving us.

He serves you and me through His life-giving Word, and keeps us on the narrow way, walking in the true light of His Word.

As John writes, *“In the Word was life, and the life was the light of men.”* (John 1:4)

Jesus also serves us with His life-giving body and blood. When you receive Him in your mouth, and confess Him on your lips, you share in His sonship and are counted among the children of God.

As John writes, *“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”* (John 1:12)

Just as the flames rising from the burning bush did not consume Moses but gave him light for the path set before him, so Jesus—the true Light of men—keeps us from the dangers of this world, for He has overcome it.

May we greet others with "*Merry Christmas*" carrying this confession in our hearts and minds. May we proclaim Christ in all our words and deeds, confessing that He is our Lord and Saviour, born for us and for our salvation.

I wish you all a blessed Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus!

Now, may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Him. Amen.

Vijay Samuel