

**Reflections for Christmas Day – 25 December 2021**  
**The Mount ~ The Residence at Littledale**

For our Liturgy this Christmas Day, we find readings which remind us of the depths of God's love, poured out into the incarnation, first in the cosmos and then in the person of Jesus the Christ.



The first chapter of John's Gospel makes the precious, life-giving connection. The opening words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (Jn 1:1-2) bring us immediately to the first chapter of Genesis, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said" (Gen 1:1-3). In that chapter from Genesis, we

reflect on the creation of the universe from light to the sky and waters and Earth to the plants and fish and birds and animals to humankind.

That creation happens because God speaks the word – as creation unfolds, verse after verse is marked by the words "Then God said." The book of Wisdom repeats the same theme of God's word and creation being inseparable, "While gentle silence enveloped all things, your all-powerful word leaped from heaven" (Ws 18:14-16). Now the Gospel of John says that God chooses to come in yet another way, in Jesus who personifies the Word of God. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews echoes this sense of God's Word in the creation of the world through the cosmic Christ and in the person of Jesus the Christ, "In these last days God has spoken to us by a Son, whom God appointed heir of all things, through whom God also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word" (Heb 1:2-3).

That incarnation of God in the universe's coming into being is marked by light, "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness" (Gen 3-4). So, too, the coming of Jesus the Christ is marked by light. John says, "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (Jn 1:3-5).

There is a lovely prayer-poem from [Roddy Hamilton](#) which speaks to the beauty and wonder of Christmas light:

This Christmas I wish for you light  
to crumple up the darkness.  
This Christmas I wish for you love  
to pull us closer to one another.  
This Christmas I wish for you peace,  
the same the angels sang.  
This Christmas I wish for you starlight to follow on your way home.  
This Christmas I wish for you promise to keep hope alive for you.

This Christmas I wish for you God newly born and in the flesh.  
This Christmas I wish for you Jesus Christ born this night, light of the world.

In response to the first incarnation, as we sing in Psalm 89, all Earth rejoices, “Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the Earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises” (Ps 98:4). In our usual human-centeredness, we used to think that meant only the humans around the world. Now we know all Earth creatures rejoice in creation – in all their diverse ways of showing that joy from the trees standing so stately to flowers blossoming so beautifully to the sounds of a meowing kitten or the bark of a little puppy to the varied shapes of seashells to the dancing glow of the Northern lights.



**Alstroemeria (Peruvian Lily)**

When Jesus comes among us in that stable in Bethlehem, there is rejoicing. The angels sing, “There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favours!’” (Lk 2:13-14). The shepherds go in haste to see the baby in the manger; then “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen” (Lk 2:20). The heavens (the angels) and Earth (the shepherds who work in the fields with the flocks – the ones closest to Earth every single day) come together once more to rejoice together in the incarnation of the loving God.

Incarnation, God’s word, light, rejoicing – when that interweaving would seem to be complete, God continues to surprise us. In the late thirteenth century, Meister Eckhart says it so simply and profoundly, “God creates the entire universe fully and totally in the present now ... There where time never penetrates, where no image shines in us, in the innermost and deepest aspect of the soul, God creates the whole cosmos in the innermost depths of every soul now.” Another German theologian, Karl Rahner, says the same thing seven hundred years later, “When we say, ‘It is Christmas,’ we mean that God has spoken into the world his last, his deepest, his most beautiful word in the incarnate Word. . . And this word means: I love you, you, the world, and human beings.”

Now we are invited to speak God’s word of peace in our world – each one of us in whatever part of the world we live and minister. Today’s first reading completes the circle, “How beautiful upon



**Inca Trail, Andes, Peru**

the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news” (Is 52:7). Our Creator God and Jesus the Incarnate Word trust that we will be the messengers who will announce peace, who will bring good news, wherever we walk. What incredible trust God places in us! Not only do God and Jesus trust us to do this, but they also pour out the Spirit into our hearts and minds and spirits to be with us on our way.

Imagine all the ways in which you personally are a messenger of peace and of good news. Think about the ways, even in the past few days, in which you have brought peace or good news into someone's life. You may have done so by simply lending a listening ear or taken the time to listen to a story or given a donation in someone's name to The Gathering Place or given someone a gift that they treasure or. . .

As we say "Yes" to this invitation to be messengers of peace and good news, we are comforted by this prayer from [Pat Bergen, csj](#). Find one phrase from her prayer that you will hold close to your heart in a special way through these twelve days of Christmas:

May the Star of inclusive, poured out, communing love  
direct every decision we make on our journey.  
May our dreams lead us to profound reverence  
as we bow before the Divine born in the stable of every heart  
and in the stable of the whole universe.  
May Mary guide us in birthing the Holy One in our lives  
and in birthing Love in others.  
May Joseph engage us in deeper questioning and listening  
and give us courage to risk the next step.  
May our lives become a luminous presence,  
leading others to the place in our hearts and in the world  
where Christ is always being born anew.

Happy Christmas, each messenger of peace and good news!

