

CHRISTMAS, 2022

We are accustomed to saying that God loves us. It is a true thing to say, even if we don't always say those words with the awe that they deserve. It is an awesome thing that God loves it. More awesomely, He likes us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, became the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, truly and perfectly a human being, because He wanted to. He assumed our Human Nature to save us from sin and death, but let us not imagine Him assuming our Nature with anything like disgust. He assumed our Human Nature with joy.

At the Christmas Morning Mass, we read from the beginning of St. John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it . . . And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." The Word of St. John's Gospel, the Word through Whom all things were made, the Word that is the light of men, is the same Divine Person as the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs. Wisdom in Proverbs is personal, not abstract. Wisdom says in chapter 8 of Proverbs "Ages ago I was set up, before the beginning of the earth . . . then I was beside Him, like a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and delighting in the sons of men." Wisdom, Word, and Son are one and the same Divine Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Through this Wisdom, Word, and Son all things were made, including the human race. And what is this Divine Person's attitude to the human race? "I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and delighting in the sons of men."

Delighting in the sons of men!

Before the human race was made, God's Wisdom delighted in the sons of men that were to be. God's Word delights in the sons of men that are. When God's Son assumed human nature and became one of us, He did so with delight.

Ages before His holy Incarnation, the almighty Son of God wanted to teach human beings and make them holy. For this purpose, He took on the appearance of human flesh several times. Seemingly in the flesh, He dared Jacob/Israel to a wrestling match, and grappled with him in the darkness of early morning. Seemingly in the flesh, He accepted the hospitality of Abraham, ate with him and Sarah, and blessed them. Seemingly in the flesh, he spoke face to face with Moses, as a man speaks to a friend.

These images, these manifestations in seeming human flesh, were foreshadowings of something much greater and more awesome than Divine Wisdom briefly taking on a human appearance. They are foreshadowings of the truth proclaimed by St. John and celebrated at Christmas: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

From the moment of humanity's fall into sin and death, God the Father predestined the human race for reconciliation with Him. That reconciliation would not be accomplished by His Son taking on a human appearance and seemingly wrestling, eating, or talking with men. God's plan was much more wonderful than that. In the fullness of time, when all was ready, He would send His Holy Spirit upon a Virgin, and the power of the Most High would overshadow her. Within her Wisdom would build itself a home. Within her the Word would become flesh. From her, the Creator of time would be born in time. Divine Nature and human nature would unite in one Person, Jesus Christ, as the Divine Wisdom, Word, and Son, through Whom all things were made, came to live among the things He had made.

Jesus Christ is the New Man, truly in the flesh and truly human in all things but sin. He is the Divine Wisdom, Word and Son, but He is also one of us human beings. Consubstantial with the Father from all eternity, He chose to become consubstantial with human Mary, and through her with every single human being who has ever lived and will ever live. With delight He joined Himself to human nature in every respect but sin. The devil had held the human race captive, but the human race defeated him. Yes, it was by a Man that the devil was vanquished. The victory over sin and death is a human victory, because the Divine Wisdom, Word, and Son shares our human nature.

The wondrous participation of Divinity in humanity that is Jesus Christ promises all human beings, who are willing to belong to Jesus Christ, a participation in Divinity. We will remain human beings, yet also share in Divine Life. By the Holy Spirit Christ was conceived and born. By that same Holy Spirit we are born again for Eternal Life, through Faith and Baptism.

This promise is made quite clearly in chapter one of St. John's Gospel, read at Christmas Morning Mass. "But to all who received Him, who believed in His Name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God"

That, by God's Grace, is who we are. We are here because we believe in Jesus Christ. As we celebrate this holy Mass, receive Him into your hearts. Hear Him knock, open the door, and let Him in. He will then tell you who you truly are. By Faith and Grace, if you are cooperating with them, you are children of God, chosen by God to share eternal life with Him, because, not only loving you, He likes you.