

BIBLE READING: John 1:1-14

SERMON

Medieval artists tried hard to capture one of the core beliefs of the Christian tradition, one that we hear in today's reading from the prologue to the Gospel of John: the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

Christ the Word, cradled among words. It's an artful depiction that's both terribly literal-minded and also deeply imaginative. I admit it delights the bibliophile in me, the one who has a hard time separating his love of the Word from his love of words. Words are one of the primary ways I come to know the world, and myself within it, and the one who created it.

And here, at the opening of his Gospel, John clearly means for us to recall the one who brought the world into being. In the beginning, John writes, and with these words he opens a passageway to another book that begins in the same fashion.

With these words, in the beginning, John means for his hearers to recall the book of Genesis, the book of beginnings. He intends to conjure in his hearers' minds the God who spoke into the chaos and, word by word, articulated creation. This God who worded the world into being, John tells us, is the very Word who took flesh and came to walk among us.

And this Word was life.

And this Word was light.

And the darkness did not overcome it.

And what more shall we say on this Christmas day?

Perhaps just this: that for John, the Book of Beginnings was still being written, a story both ancient and new, a sacred text that God was yet inscribing among God's people. And is inscribing still. We who celebrate the birth of Christ are called also to be his body, and to participate in the ongoing process of the Word becoming flesh in this world. In us, in us, Christ continues to be born. In this and every season.

Many blessings upon you as we celebrate Christ's birth this Christmas, and into the beginnings that God will write within us. In the darkness and in the day, may Christ our Light, the Word made flesh, be your companion and your hope.