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DIOCESE OF GRAND FALLS

The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
Christmas 2022

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (Jn 1:1) And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

At the celebration of Mass during the Night (Christmas Eve), the Church recommends the proclamation from either the Gospel of St. Matthew or St. Luke. These Gospels narrate the birth of Jesus and tell us 'how' Jesus came to be born. At celebrations of Mass during the Day (Christmas Day), the Church recommends the proclamation from the beginning of the Gospel of St. John. Known as the Prologue, St. John begins his Gospel telling us 'why' Jesus came to be born.

St. John reminds us that Jesus, the Word, is eternal, Divine, and is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He also reminds us that in Jesus, God became flesh and lived among us to reveal the Glory of God.

I have been reflecting lately both on 'how' Jesus lived among us and 'why' Jesus made his choice.

Think of all the possible ways that Jesus could 'live among us' and still truly become one of us: Jesus could have been born into a wealthy and powerful family. Or, he could have been born into a well-connected family. Or he could have been born into a Priestly or Rabbinic family. He could even have been born into nobility.

Rather, Jesus chose to be born into a simple, hardworking family; living in a remote, almost inaccessible village, with limited educational or career opportunities. His parents' marriage began in what many considered to be a scandal. Even the conditions of the moment of his birth speak of a life of hardship.

If this is 'how' Jesus chose to 'live among us', 'why' did he make this choice?

To answer this question, let me ask another: Did his choice of how to live among us in any way diminish his dignity as God or as a human being? Of course not!

Jesus' birth reminds us that a person's dignity is not found in their wealth or power or connections but rather our dignity comes from being children of God. And our dignity can never be diminished by any condition of life in which we find ourselves. Too often people are made to believe that if they do not live as others think they should, they forfeit their dignity and they can be excluded. The choice that Jesus made as to how to live among us condemns this thinking and practice.

Perhaps our reflection on the birth of Jesus will help each of us become more secure in the dignity we possess as children of God. Perhaps this reflection will help each of us to embrace our dignity and celebrate our lives.

And perhaps our reflection on the birth of Jesus will help us as communities of faith to welcome all; to lovingly recognize and acknowledge the dignity of every person as gifted by virtue of being God's children. During our parish visits for our Synodal Journey, we heard over and over again that the Church needs to become more welcoming. We heard heart-breaking stories of how people feel excluded from the church because of the pastoral bias of some clergy or laity. We heard stories of couples being refused marriage because they are living together, of children being refused baptism because their parents are unmarried. We heard of the needs of poor people being ignored because of their poverty. We heard the disconnect between the Church and the LGBTQ community and of LGBTQ individuals being isolated because of their sexual orientation. But most of all, we heard a deep hope that our Church will become more lovingly welcoming of everyone as children of God.

As we kneel before the manger scene and reflect on the birth of Jesus may we rejoice that we share with Him the dignity of the children of God and ask for the grace to embrace the dignity of all we meet. Let us pray that in continuing the Synodal journey, individuals and the church herself, may become more aware of the dignity of every person created in the image and likeness of God shown by the birth of Jesus.

Let us pray for the courage to live out that belief.

Merry Christmas,



Most Reverend R. Anthony Daniels
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