

A New Year's Eve message about Christmas according to John!

Listen to John's Gospel: *"The Word became a human being and lived here with us. From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us (John 1:14, Contemporary English Version).*

If we want to give this verse a "name" we may call it: *"Christmas according to John"*.

In John's version there is no reference to Bethlehem, shepherds, angels, wise men and all the other details that usually make our celebration's itinerary.

John begins to tell the story of Jesus since the "beginning". (John 1:1) He tells us that before time and creation, the Son of God existed and that he played an important part in the creation of our world and of our human race. We need to know that he always has had an interest in the details of our "daily reality".

And then John tells us that the Son of God "lived here with us".

"Christmas according to John" wants to assure us that in Jesus, God came to experience what it's like to live on this earth, to dream and desire, to experience life, to be excited, to be disappointed, to feel pain and human tragedy, weakness and death. Jesus came to be part of everything significant in every person's life.

The point of this verse, *The Word became a human being*, is that we are never alone:

In Jesus, God is with us when we are depressed and hurting and sick.

In Jesus, God is with us when we are hit with bad news.

In Jesus, God is with us when we feel guilty and ashamed.

In Jesus, God is with us when we are worried about someone we love.

In Jesus, God is with us when we are so excited about what lies ahead - that it almost scares us to death!

In Jesus, God is with us when we are powerless to face the challenges of a new year - 2010 - that is to dawn on us this weekend!!

We say all of this because the Bible says that *The Word became a human being*, in Jesus. He is Immanuel - *God with us*.

Jesus has become part of our realities. Christmas tells us that God is not detached and disconnected from our world and our experiences. He is with us. He has come to hug us and hold us, even though our mistakes and impurities often make us feel unattractive and unloved.

Jesus was born to show us the heart of God. It is a heart that pulses with love for every one of us. Jesus does not come to us with philosophical descriptions and definitions of love. Or with complex assessments of why we are whom we think we are. Jesus is love and simply came to show us the love of God.

He is the only way to God the Father and eternal life.

Jesus is the only source of inner peace.

In this baby of Bethlehem, born to Mary, we shall see as much of God as we shall ever hope to see in our earthly life. This baby is God in flesh and blood.

Jesus makes a difference to your life.

Christmas invites you to trust Jesus.

Christmas challenges you to take Jesus seriously during every day in 2010 - and beyond the new year.

Jesus wants to refresh your daily existence, even when the dirt amongst which we live, starts to show.

God has a word for you for today and for the year ahead:

God became a human being because he loves you.

Trust God. Accept his love. Understand that he knows what you need.

Ask him what you need, anyway.

Be calm.

God is in control - and is with you. He will bless and keep you!

This was what celebrating Christmas has been about all along!