



Christmas Words

An Advent to Candlemas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney

Word

Sunday 29th December



*The Seven Sorrows of Mary (Christ as a twelve-year-old in the Temple) by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)
[Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany]*

Scripture: Luke 2.41 - 52

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

To reflect

In today's Gospel reading we encounter the 12 year old Jesus. He has been, with his family to the Jerusalem Temple and somehow in the crowd leaving to return to Galilee no-one has noticed Jesus isn't with them. When Jesus is found, he has not left the Temple but has been in discussion with the teachers and scholars (see the painting by Dürer above).

Jesus has been illuminating the word of God in the Hebrew scriptures (the Old Testament) to the learned people in the Temple. Emmanuel – the word made flesh – is exploring God's word, his word, with those whose calling in life, their service to God was to study and teach the scriptures and help people apply to them to their lives.

What does the term 'word became flesh' – the incarnation, mean to you this Christmas Season, we have heard it in the scriptures, sung it in carols (perhaps in O Come All Ye Faithful), but what comes to mind for you, what new insights do you have this Christmastide?

To pray – The Collect for the First Sunday after Christmas

O God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ:
grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our Saviour,
so we may with confidence behold him as he comes to be our Judge;
who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.
Amen.

The Word Became Flesh by Shannon Evans

The Word became flesh
and dwelt among us.
The Word that existed before all things;
the Word that holds all things together.
This Word—the Word, the Sacred Word
that spoke life and breath into being—
became flesh.

The Word became flesh and dwelt in skin;
in bumps and bruises;
in sickness and longing;
in laughter and grief;
in loneliness and fear.
The Word became flesh and knew us, oh
how we have been known!

Come, let us adore the Word.
Come, let us adore the Flesh.
Come, let us revel in our humanity;
this condition that Divine Love has declared
Sacred.
For the Word became flesh
and dwells among us.

(from "Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: Through the Year with Ignatian Spirituality.")

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rj2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'What Child Is This' by Thomas Hewitt Jones, one version is by Wells Cathedral Choir. A new setting of familiar words.
- 'O Come All Ye Faithful' one recording is by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. This carol contains the words 'Word of the Father and made his dwelling with us'

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.