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## *The Solemnity of Christmas*

**A sermon by the Rev. Ricardo Bailey**  
**The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day – Year B**

*In the beginning...*

My sisters and brothers in the Lord: Merry Christmas!

In our Gospel this Christmas Day, we hear the three most familiar words to every Christian: NOT, “pay, pray, and obey,” but “In the beginning...” The only other place in the Bible that we see and hear these three words is in the Book of Genesis. Again, the author of that book which is the first book in the Bible also begins the book with the words, “In the beginning...” This is a great revelation to the Church from God because it is so clear that God is telling us that He has been with the world from the beginning but just as important, his Word has also been there from the beginning. We are told that God’s Word began the creation of the world and humanity and that same Word that comes from God also begins the new life for the world and humanity!

The Gospel also presents to us in a very brief but rich presentation the person of John the Baptist. In the Gospel according to John, the author presents John the Baptist as the one who serves the Word of God as a witness. John is very powerful in his preaching, but John reminds the people that he is not the light that is coming into the world, but that he is only preparing the people to receive the light in their lives! So, here we have another theme from Genesis that relates to the word of God – the word is also the light of the world! The light that has come into the world will enlighten everyone to hear, receive, and share the truth!

Then, John’s Gospel reminds us of the power, the mystery, and the humility of God in taking on our human identity in the Incarnation! “And the Word became flesh and lived among us...” God has come to us and God is with us! This identity of God is now known to us in faith and in history as Jesus of Nazareth! God came to save his people and the only way that God could show and prove to us that he knows us, that he understands us and that he is always with us was to come down from heaven and clothe himself in the flesh of humanity.

From the beginning of time, God has been revealing himself as the God who loves, saves, and restores his people to a new life. However, we did not then and in many ways we do not even in our present day and time always allow God’s light and word to have a prominent place in our lives. The great thing about God is that the mystery of the incarnation was not an isolated event that happened over two-thousand years ago: the mystery of the incarnation is as relevant today as it ever was in the history of the Church.

The celebration of the season of Christmas is a celebration that reminds the Church that the Church must tell the world of the power of God in and through his only son, Jesus the Lord! God has not abandoned his people and that is a message that we need to hear in Ferguson, Missouri, we need to hear this message in Brooklyn, New York, we need to hear this message in North Korea, we need to hear this message in our own homes! We cannot deny or even hide from the power of God even when we try to make everything that is happening in this world all about us! We cannot continue to be selfish and self-centered in the ways that we approach the challenges of life! We must let the word of God and the light of the world teach us how to bring light to places of darkness.

Jesus is both the word and the light of the world! Think about what God is saying to us right now!!! The world does not

want to hear the truth. When people are exposed to the truth they try to cover their ears or even bring silence to the word that is spoken. There is power in the things that we say! The world does not want to see the light. When people want to do evil and want to bring harm to others – that is mostly done when our hearts and minds are trapped in the darkness. Jesus, the light of the world is here so that we will not have to be swallowed by the things that are dark, but that you and I can see his light, share his light, and live in his light!

My dear friends, the God that we love and serve is indeed a God of beginnings: NEW BEGINNINGS! It is always true that during this time of the year so many of us have obligatory matters to tend to: we go and visit family, we watch football and eat delicious food, we serve others from our own time and treasure and we will most likely exchange gifts! The greatest gift that any priest or minister of the church is to see people in the pews – especially, on this day.

While it may be the case that you or someone you know have been alienated by the church because of the words someone may have said to you, the inattentiveness of those entrusted with church ministry, or even the genuine hurt and disappointment that you have experienced: let me boldly speak on behalf of those who I share the priestly ministry with and say that I do not know what may have hurt you in the past, but MERRY CHRISTMAS today and I am so thankful that you are here this morning! God is the God of new beginnings and God is doing something in this place right here and right now! The doors of this Cathedral are opened and we are ready for Jesus to make us all right so that we can be his presence to one another!

*“In the beginning...”* God is faithful, God has been faithful, and God will continue to be faithful! The goodness of God reminds us that in him, with him, and through him we are always being made new by his son Jesus Christ! The season of Christmas will come every year and we will see trees, houses, and churches decorated beautifully, but the most beautiful reminder about all of this is that from the beginning of time God had all of us in his mind! God loves us and God will continue to reveal himself to us through the words and actions of his son Jesus!

*“As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, [a] world without end! Amen!”*

Merry Christmas to all of you and may God continue to bless you!