

Traveling Companion: And it was Christmas Day Again!

Fr. Michael Tracey

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Letter writing has been a trait of my mother's since I left home at the immature age of twelve. Weekly and consistently, she wrote and continued to write through college and priesthood. Email spoils that by its instant nature and lack of penmanship. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us; the word of local news, who was sick, who was home on holidays, what was happening in the neighborhood, how work on the farm was going, what the weather was like.

When I went to college, the letter writing continued and was anticipated. Of course, they demanded a response in kind. While in college, the word became flesh and dwelt among us; the gentle and often inaudible word of God, speaking to a young and often confused heart, possibly inviting it to a life of service in the church.

At ordination to the priesthood, that whisper became a reality, affirmed by the church and empowered by the Holy Spirit. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us; the word of God taking root in a heart, opening up opportunities to share it, hearts to receive it and lives to be changed because of it.

When my parents came to visit me in Mississippi over twenty years ago, the first question my father asked a friend was, "How do you like him, out here?" He was assured and didn't need to ask again. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us; the word of assurance, acceptance, support, of peace of mind.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, a word made flesh in all our lives; the word of love spoken by lovers, sealed in a sacrament, lived during a lifetime.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us; the word of parents, celebrated in love so beautiful that, together Creator and created, join to create another human being, spending a lifetime, loving, sharing, caring, shaping, forming it so that the word made flesh and dwelt among us may continue.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, a word that helps each of us discern our gifts and talents and opens us to the possibilities of using such to allow the word made flesh to continue to dwell among us; a word that is awesome in the ways it reminds us, not only of our gifts and talents, but the privilege of continuing to spread the word.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, a word that God whispered at the beginning of time. And God said let there be and so it was and continues to be; a word that creates, calls, recreates and challenges continually.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us through the pages of the word of God, the Bible; words made flesh and dwelling among us in the persons of the Abrahams, Moseses, Davids, Isaiahs, Jeremiahs, John the Baptists and a host of other major and minor prophets who continue to challenge and shape us today through a word made flesh and dwelling among us.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us two thousand years ago; a Word born of humble origin, in a simple stable, on a cold, winter's night; a Word we gather today to see, hear, meet and experience all over again.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; the word that reminds us He makes all things well for those who trust him; healing us and making us strong at the broken places in our lives; offering us sacramental forgiveness; his peace.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:1-14). May he continue to make his dwelling among us this Christmas and always.