

# TRINITY NEWS

## Sunday after Christmas Jesus of Nazareth the Eikon of Grace and Truth

**“And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the father’ only son, full of grace and truth” - John 1:14.**

These words reflect on Christmas after the event. They do not describe it. No words like it had ever been written before, and none since. They are the most succinct and beautiful words of reflection ever written about Christmas.

The “Word” is the **Logos**, the ground of all being, and the normal Greek word for the spoken word. The Ground of all Being came to Mary and the vulnerable human who came forth spoke words that are engraved on human memory. This Word became a real human, “flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones.” That reality should never be covered up doctrines of the Eternal woven around his person.

He “dwelt among us”, literally “pitched his tent among us.” No matter how sophisticated we are we are still wandering nomads without a permanent home on this earth, pitching our tent here and there on the way. This fragile uncertainty contributes to and motivates our compensations, our substitutions for reality, our violent reactions, and our inability to find a lasting peace.

“We have seen his glory.” This gazes not only at Christ’s birth but also at his life and at moments like the Transfiguration which John does not describe. It was a gloriously transparent life, hidden though it is in part in the literary layers of the Gospels. As has been said in weighted words, Jesus “lived so absolutely out of the Spirit of God that it authenticated his existence from the very beginning.” This “glory” is not the glory of human achievement, incredible though that is, but the glory of that which reaches into the deepest wells of human spirit and emerges luminous with the Spirit of God. When that happens the holy of holies is not just at a place in Jerusalem, but a walking and speaking and feeling tabernacle of God in a person on earth. We catch glimpses of this in the saints and holy people inside and outside religions. We also catch traces of it in love for someone that we cannot fully explain or successfully deny.

**“The glory as of the father’s only son.”** Uniqueness is barely possible on earth, and only those with an incontestable humility get anywhere near it. Roger Bannister broke the four minutes mile barrier as a runner years ago, and we marvelled. It was made into a wonderful movie. Many since have lowered the mark. Real uniqueness bears the stamp of the Creator. Whatever we make, he has made it before us, or given us the skills to make it. The Greek word *monogenes* is recognisable as “only or uniquely generated”. Jesus of Nazareth was “truly human” like us, but he clearly appears to have carried within himself memory vestiges of a filial relationship with Abba God. This emerged at times to authenticate his miracles and person. It also seems to have flooded his being occasionally, sometimes in response to prayer, and also perhaps unexpected at other times.

**“Full of grace and truth.”** Grace Kelly was an elegant film star with a serene face who became a real-life princess of Monaco. **“Grace”** here means the grace of God, a free gift, unmerited and unattainable except in partial imitation. It is the grace of Abba who stands near the Cross and watches his own heart-love being torn apart by crucifixion. Jurgen Moltmann wrote a memorable book called the Crucified God that freed us up to talk this way about Abba. Cosmetically we may buy a new face, but we cannot buy the grace of God. **“Truth”** in the Scriptures is “revealed from that which is hidden.” It is not  $2 \times 2 = 4$  but an inescapable reality that implants itself in our mind as self-evident. Like our souls it bears the imprint of the Creator. Access to it can come in flash, or after years of prayer and the contemplation of God. It never comes alone, but with other authentications from the *Paraclete*, “the One walks alongside us in conversation” This “conversation” is with our minds, hearts and souls. It awaits our response, patiently.

This is such a beautiful and succinct reflection, worthy of our attention, on Jesus as the Christ coming amongst us.

Bishop Arthur Jones

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### **NEXT WEEK’S READINGS:**

Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 84; Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a  
Luke 2:41-52 or Mathew 2:1-12

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**Parish Annual General Meeting (AGM):  
January 26, 2014 after the 9:30 service**

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