

Palimpsest* (pa • limp • sest)

Week of **December 12, 2021**
Third Sunday of Advent

Sermon: Glimpsing God Through Jesus
Scripture: John 1:14

Your Notes

Sermon Supplemental Reading

“And the Word became flesh” is a christological affirmation of a radical nature with far-reaching implications for our thinking about God, life in the world, and what it means to be Christian. Analogies about changing clothes, as in the stories of a ruler who wears peasant clothing in order to move among his subjects freely, are not adequate for clarifying John 1:14. The church has always had members who wanted to protect their Christ from John 1:14 with phrases such as “seemed to be,” “appeared,” and “in many ways was like” flesh. Whatever else John 1:14 means, it does state without question the depth, the intensity, and the pursuit of God’s love for the world.

– Craddock, F. (1992)

Preaching Through the Christian Year, A

Jesus became flesh so as to show forth the love of God among us, a love which is not merely an expression of good will, but the power of an energy which is the heart, core, an cohesive force of the universe...Christ is the human expression of God to us, and thus we must try to understand what God meant in Christ...Christ is not simply the new male person, but one who shows all persons how to live. As a human he shows us what human self-possession and self-giving are. Thereby Christ shows us the link between divine and human, the cosmos and its conscious inhabitants.

– Wilson-Kastner, P. (1983)

Faith, Feminism, and the Christ

* A Palimpsest is: 1: writing material (as a parchment or tablet) used one or more times, 2: something having unusually diverse layers or aspects apparent beneath the surface

It is difficult to see it from here,
I know,
but trust me when I say
this blessing is inscribed
on the horizon.
Is written on/that far point
you can hardly see.
Is etched into/a landscape
whose contours you cannot know
from here.
All you know/is that it calls you,
draws you,/pulls you toward
what you have perceived
only in pieces,
in fragments that came to you
in dreaming/or in prayer.
I cannot account for how,
as you draw near,
the blessing embedded in the horizon
begins to blossom
upon the soles of your feet,
shimmers in your two hands.
It is one of the mysteries
of the road,
how the blessing
you have traveled toward,
waited for,
ached for
suddenly appears
as if it had been with you
all this time,
as if it simply/needed to know
how far you were willing/to walk
to find the lines
that were traced upon you
before the day/that you were born.

- Richardson, J. (2015)
"Drawing Near,
from *A Circle of Grace*

Your heart goes out
to insignificant and little things,
to children, to the poor -
these are your kingdom.
For you became yourself
defenseless and humble,
resembling a human word,
a piece of bread, a name
that has to die.
We ask you then,
let us resemble you,
let us, imperfect as we are,
become your children,
your own beloved...

- Oosterhuis, H. (1968)
"Your Word Goes Out."
Your Word is Near

Questions

- Where do you brush up against the mystery of the Incarnation?
- How awkward is it that Jesus, the Word, was born into poverty in an occupied country?
- Are you more comfortable thinking of Jesus as human, as divine, or firmly as both? Why?