

## **Homily Christmas Morning 2023 – God's LOVE Enters the World**

'God is LOVE and anyone who lives in LOVE lives in God and God lives in them.'  
(St John The Evangelist)

My Mum used to insist that I was named after St John the Evangelist, the 'BELOVED disciple'. I once asked her why she was so adamant on this point and she replied, 'John, was the favourite disciple of Jesus. He was always there for Our Lord, particularly during his passion. It was John who was ever present: in the garden; at the trial; when Jesus died on The Cross. Jesus LOVED John and John LOVED Jesus. You couldn't be named after a better Saint!'

Saint John, the LOVED disciple, through his life and his Gospel was certainly 'the beautiful feet of one 'who brings Good News'', as stated in the First Reading from Isaiah from The Mass on Christmas Day.

How beautiful on the mountains,  
are the feet of one who brings good news,  
who heralds peace, brings happiness,  
proclaims salvation,  
and tells Zion,  
'Your God is king!'  
Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,  
they shout for joy together,  
for they see the Lord face to face,  
as he returns to Zion.  
Break into shouts of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord is consoling his people,  
redeeming Jerusalem.

Arguably, John may also have written the Letter to The Hebrews (The authorship is disputed and largely unknown) where the proclamation of the Kerygma and the author's LOVE and absolute trust in Jesus is clear for all to see:

At various times in the past and in various different ways spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty.

In The Prologue to his Gospel of Christmas Day John offers us a literary masterpiece, which describes the Incarnate and infinite LOVE of God entering our broken world today:

In the beginning was the Word:  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things came to be,  
not one thing had its being but through him.  
All that came to be had life in him  
and that life was the light of men,  
a light that shines in the dark,  
a light that darkness could not overpower.  
The Word was the true light  
that enlightens all;  
and he was coming into the world.  
He was in the world

that had its being through him,  
and the world did not know him.  
He came to his own domain  
and his own people did not accept him.  
**But to all who did accept him**  
**he gave power to become children of God,**  
to all who believe in the name of him  
who was born not out of human stock  
or urge of the flesh  
or will of man  
but of God himself.  
The Word is made flesh,  
he lives among us,  
and we see his glory,  
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,  
full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:1-18)

John LOVED Jesus because Jesus LOVED him first. Christmas is the reliving of that LOVE of God entering the world in poverty and humility. Indeed, this Christmastide we could paraphrase another of St. John's beautifully powerful passages and make it personal to each of us: "For God LOVED me (the world) so much that he gave his only Son, so that I (those), who believe in him, may not die but have eternal life." (Jn3:16).

The question I ask myself this Christmas morning is. 'Am I, like St John, responding to that LOVE of Jesus by loving God and loving my neighbour as myself?' I'm sure my Mum, who named me, would have expected no less yet I'm sure like Jesus, she understands my failings and weakness.