

<p><b>TESTO DEL VANGELO</b></p> <p><i>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be.</i></p> <p><i>What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God.</i></p> <p><i>He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.</i></p> <p><i>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him.</i></p> <p><i>He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.</i></p>	<p><i>But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God.</i></p> <p><b><i>And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me."</i></b></p> <p><i>From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.</i></p> <p><i>No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.</i></p>
---	--

We have celebrated so many Christmases, countless homilies, countless explanations of this big mystery; but we have to admit, with humbleness, simplicity and sincerity, that, despite all these homilies and explanations, we have understood very little of Christmas...

We have maybe understood that one day, two thousand years ago, an extraordinary baby was born in an extraordinary way, a baby who was also God, who made some extraordinary things, who would later die on a cross, leaving us with His apostles, who founded the Church, and we also understood that we have been baptized in this mystery. But everything ends here: we actually live like all the other human beings. We have to admit this.

Today, I would like to “cause you distress”, because only when we are in distress, we can change our way of living.

The homily in my opinion is not a mere theological explanation of the Scriptures or an amicable “fervour” when saying: “Yes, the Lord loves us, let’s go on this way and everything will be fine...”

Nothing will be fine!

Because the society around us is telling us that nothing will be fine!

And in these days the Pope was brave enough to ask all the cardinals, while they were brought together, to wake up, because we are no more living in a world that was shaped around the faith in Christ, on the contrary we are living in a world that is shaped around many other things, where we are unimportant.

**We are unimportant because we are not able to show with our life that being faithful to Jesus is the most beautiful thing that could ever happen in our life!!**

These words come from someone who has been an atheist.

Therefore, I know from experience what it means to believe or not to believe in God, what it means to believe in Jesus or in Buddha or in someone else.

**The most beautiful thing that could ever happen in our life, this thing that did happen to us but many people haven't had the joy to experience, is being Christian, being disciples of Jesus.**

We should therefore thank God because we were born in a context where this chance was given to us "free of charge".

The Lord one day said: *many prophets wished to see what you are seeing but they couldn't, many men of wisdom before me wished to hear what you are hearing but they couldn't.*

The first reaction to Christmas should therefore be the amazement for being the object of the infinite love of God, who wants to change our lives.

Our world is not doing fine, we know it, but **in this world that is not doing fine our lives can be fine, even extremely fine, they can be full of joy, happiness, light, meaning, we can walk through our lives without the burden of our problems...**

We all have problems, I have problems too, I have big problems, but we can walk through life with hope, joy, faith, serenity.

**A Christian can never be sad and depressed.**

Why?

**Because a Christian is a son of God, brother of Jesus, because His legacy is for him is His *Reign*, because he is walking towards the eternal beatitude, because through his real faith - not the faith that he declares, not the faith that he proclaims with his lips - he can experiment the New Life that Jesus brought to us.**

This is why I try to be radical, because I know that the majority of people deprive themselves from the gift that God could give them.

Yesterday, in the confessional, I suffered a lot while listening to some confessions...

I suffered for those who don't know how to confess, who don't know what to say, who are not Christian and come to church once a year, as if God weren't born, as if God hadn't died...

**The tragedy of our life is that we live a life that is alienated from God.**

I wish this isn't true for those who, like you, come to church every Sunday, who confess on a regular basis and in their confession bring not only their sins, but also the desire to live together with Jesus, because this is the meaning of a Christian life; God becomes man, the Emmanuel who wants to walk with us.

Yesterday evening's Gospel was about what happened on Christmas: Mary leaving, the cave, the hotel with no rooms available... and all these poetic and touching things, but, at the end of the story, what's the meaning of all this?

Today Saint John explains it to us.

The fourth Gospel doesn't tell us anything about Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or the shepherds, or the angels...; he writes a substantial text that gives meaning to the whole Event.

This is fundamental because the peculiarity of human beings is about getting the meaning of things, choosing what kind of life we want to live, what meaning we want to give to our existence...

Human life is here; man is the only "animal" that needs to do meaningful things; and he gets to choose what kind of meaning he will give them, not a meaning chosen by his parents, his grandparents, his tradition, without understanding why.

The authentic faith is not about performing learnt rituals, being touched and then... living like pagans!

**Having faith means understanding that Jesus is the meaning of our life, being Christians is the most beautiful thing of our life and it gives our life meaning, significance, strength!**

Saint John's Prologue would be worth a meditation on each word, on each verse, but in today's homily we will just observe in detail this verse:

*For the law was given through Moses;  
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

This is the break [between the Old and the New Testament].

The *law* refers to the imposition of the commandments: Moses has told you that you must do these things if you want to be God's friends; if you don't do them, you will not be God's friends.

But Jesus has come to give us *grace*: *grace and truth have come thanks to Jesus Christ.*

Jesus gives us *grace* in order to be able to use the law, to be able to live as sons of God, to be able to become in some way friends of God.

Do you understand the difference?

The Jews still follow Moses' law, the Muslims follow the Koran, they don't have the *grace* that we have; they don't have it because they have not been baptized and because they don't look for it in their prayers.

**This *grace* opens up to a completely new world, a world that is inaccessible to those who don't have this faith.**

For this reason, the following verse says:

*No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son,  
who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*

This is destabilizing also for all those intellectuals, philosophers, and thinkers of this world; there is a branch of philosophy called *theoretical philosophy*, and another one called *theodicy*, and both try to understand what God is like; but Saint John says: *No one has ever seen God.*

**Only when we become Christian, when we become disciples of Jesus, and live the *word* that Jesus has taught us, then we get to know God; we Christians know God through a different kind of knowledge.**

If you talk with a “big” university professor of theoretical philosophy, someone who doesn't believe in Jesus, you will certainly know more than him about God, you don't have to be afraid of his academic titles or the books he might have written. Then, if you live the word of God you will be able to say: “you, atheistic philosopher, don't know anything about God”, because our true, lived faith gives us this certainty.

**Faith is something that has roots and changes one's life only if it is lived, not only declared, proclaimed with one's lips.**

Let's then thank God today for Christmas, because the Lord has come into our world, he has become man, but he hasn't simply become man once and that's all: **God wants, on the contrary, to keep becoming man in our lives!**

**He became man to let us become like Him, to rise us to the level of dignity of the heavenly life.**

God is still waiting to become man, to grow in our life, to become big.

Today we celebrate and contemplate baby Jesus in the crib; this Baby is in some way in our heart because we, too, have been generated by God, like Him, through the Holy Spirit; without the maternal womb, but, if we think about it, the **baptismal font** is a maternal womb in itself! There is the font, there is the water, **it is the womb of the Church where we were born.**

Let us not leave this Baby alone like a half abortion, and infant, a handicapped, but let Him grow!

Today, let us promise God that this year we will make His presence grow in our life.

May the Lord be praised  
And Merry Christmas to all of you.