

In the beginning, God created the world in seven days. The opening chapters of Genesis tell of “a God whose mere word creates a beautiful universe in which human beings are an integral and important part” (Gn Intro).

The Gospel of John opens in a similar manner: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1). Jesus is the Word of God who preexisted the creation of the world. Through his human birth and ministry, he reveals the Father to us and he reveals our destiny as well.

“The Gospel of John begins with a magnificent prologue, which states many of the major themes and motifs of the gospel, much as an overture does for a musical work” (Jn Intro).

- “What came to be through him was life” (Jn 1:3b-4a). When Jesus spoke at the dawn of creation, all that we need to sustain life on earth was created. Sun light, water, earth, plants, animals, fish, and finally man were created in six days and God rested on the seventh. Life is more than a mere earthly existence. When we speak of life, we also speak of eternal life. God is the author life. He gives each human life an eternal soul.
- “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:5). During the earthly life of Jesus, he was constantly challenged by those who did not understand and wanted to silence him. We know that he was arrested and condemned to death. With his death on Good Friday, there was profound grief as the forces of darkness appeared to have silenced the Eternal Word. Jesus descended into death. The light of Christ shined in the dark nether world of the dead. Jesus rose from the dead and he helped all who had died marked by the signs of faith to rise to new life.
- John the Baptist was sent by God for “testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him” (Jn 1:7). Beyond the testimony of John, others will testify as well. The Samaritan woman receives life giving water at the well and then draws others to Christ. “Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me everything I have done’” (Jn 4:39). By implication, we his followers are also called to testify to the transforming power of God’s love as revealed by Jesus.
- “The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world” (Jn 1:9). Jesus is both human and divine. He is the Eternal Word who always existed. He is human, being born of a mother 2,000 years ago. Liturgically we acknowledge this when we refer to Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Mary.
  - Jesus enlightens us on how to be a disciple. “If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do” (Jn 13:14-15).
  - Jesus enlightens us about God by revealing the Father to us. “The whole gospel of John is a progressive revelation of the glory of God’s only Son, who comes to reveal the Father and then returns in glory to the Father” (Jn Intro).
- “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (1:14). In the Old Testament, God was present in one place, the tent sometimes called the tabernacle. Becoming human, Jesus dwells among us, literally he “pitches his tent” with us. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). Jesus offers us his Body and Blood in Holy Communion, that he may dwell in us and to help us grow in holiness. His ultimate plan is for us to pitch our tents in heaven. “In my Father’s house

there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be” (Jn 14:2-3).

Throughout the Octave of Christmas (the 8 days between December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>) we celebrate Jesus’s coming among us 2,000 years ago as we patiently await his second coming. The prologue of John poetically presents the themes of the Gospel of John while at the same time inviting us to participate in the ongoing life of Christ through the church. The themes for the Gospel are themes for our life as well. Take some time as we end this year to meditate on the opening words of the Gospel of John (1:1-18). Listen to the Lord as he leads us into the new year.