SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Gospel: John 1:1-18

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 into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

REFLECTION 1:   'AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH'

I was looking at a documentary recently on the subject of monkeys by David Attenborough. David was explaining that these creatures, so like us in so many respects were able to crack nuts open with hammers and even saw timber. However, the main aspect that distinguishes us from other mammals is our creative complex and the spoken word. Not only can we communicate with one another using words, but we can also create whole new worlds through storytelling, poetry and drama. Our words are creative and can bring things about, make things happen. We can name ships, start wars, and make peace all through our use of words. Who, at my age, could forget those chilling words on radio spoken by Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of England announcing the onset of the Second World War, 'I have to tell you that from midnight tonight, Great Britain will be at war with Germany.'

Since the beginning of time, the human race, sprung from the seed of Adam, yearned for a Saviour, a Redeemer, someone who would bring meaning into our living on this planet. We human beings realized that through our intellect we were endowed with the never-ending search for knowledge of the truth, while our wills were searching for what was good and wholesome. It was only when the Supreme Truth and the Ultimate Goodness resided in the person of one human being could all human beings be at peace. It was to Mary, a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph in the village of Nazareth in the region of Galilee, Israel in year 1AD, that the Angel Gabriel, a messenger from God, invited Mary to become the Mother of the Son of God. It was the consequence of Mary's positive response, her 'Fiat', 'Let it be done according to your word,' that these words became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world. For ever after, Jesus would be known as the 'Word of God' 'The Divine Word' 'The Word

made flesh' Mary's words became Flesh in Jesus Christ and as Scripture expresses it, 'pitched his tent among us.'

Jesus Christ is at the heart of the festivities we celebrate at Christmas. In fact the very word 'Christmas' is derived from the words, 'Christ' and 'Mass' – a mirror of the transformation that takes place on our altars, where bread becomes his body and the wine his precious blood, every day has become a Christ – Mass, the nourishment that transforms us to his likeness. The commercialism and tinsel of Christmas can help us, provided we never lose sight of the Word made flesh that dwells among us.