

Christmas Day Sermon 5 by Bishop Michael Hawkins

By the Right Reverend Michael W. Hawkins

Bishop of Saskatchewan

St. John is most clear in identifying Jesus, born of Mary, as the Creator of the world become a creature, the Word made flesh. Since the creation did not recognize its Creator, he came unto his own, but his own received him not. We do not recognize God as God, and we do not receive one another as human beings. They knew him not, and they received him not. This is the whole story of sin and of Jesus' earthly life.

But John gives us the Gospel of Christmas short and sweet. It is about receiving and believing Jesus. Jesus was born that we might be born again, born a human child that we might be re-born the children of God. This happens, as St. John so succinctly puts it, by believing and receiving, and that is what Christmas is about, believing and receiving Jesus Christ.

John talks about believing on the name of Jesus, by which he means acknowledging Jesus for who he really is. What is his Name? He is the Word made flesh. To believe on his name is to know him as God of God, born of the Virgin Mary. His name is

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Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. His name is Immanuel - God with us - and he is the King of the Jews. Believing on his name means trusting and acknowledging him for who he is - your God and Saviour.

When we recognize the true dignity of this child in the manger, the Son of God, we come to know our new dignity in him, the children of God. Christ's birth is our re-birth, a brand new, wonderful beginning for all of humanity.

Christmas is to receive and believe Jesus Christ the Lord, the Word made flesh. It is to be touched and changed by this gift of God, of God giving himself to us and for us. It is all to you and all for you. Receive and believe.