

THE WORD AND THE FLESH

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FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Galatians 3:23-25;4:4-7 John 1:1-18 Psalm 147 or 147:13-21 FOR THE READING [CLICK HERE](#) Even with the recent memories of the sugared story of the stable, shepherds, angels and wise men the lectionary move us quickly to the first chapter of John's Gospel and in doing so completely changes the vision of the birth of Jesus. It presents us with majestic phrases difficult to understand, the text seems more poetry than theological commentary. The passage reminds us that the child born in Bethlehem is both very God and true man. It reminds us that the manger of Bethlehem is only the earthly side of the bridge to the eternal Christ. That what we worship is between the flesh (a representation of all earthly things) and the divine Word. Preparing for preaching today it occurred to me that rather than to elucidate the meaning of the passage for you, I will just write my one poetic prose on the Incarnation, and so here it goes:

THE FLESH AND THE WORD
 Flesh, tangible, with already made history and history in the making, The flesh caught in the world, the flesh of the unborn child clean and the flesh that gets dirty over time, muddied with unfulfilled hopes, with unsatisfied desires, with prisons that we ourselves make. The flesh of thirst and hunger, the flesh of indifference and passion, located flesh, flesh fever and sweat, pain and reunion, abuse and love, death and resurrection. The flesh of what could be and was not, the flesh of the unexpected that will be, the flesh of the return of life to death, the flesh of the human journey, the flesh of those who love us and those who hate us, The flesh of this land, who struggles to make this country mine, the flesh of our country, our families, our neighborhoods, the flesh there, the sweltering summer or the flesh of the suffocating altitude from where he came from, The flesh of my black bitter coffee, the flesh of the sweet smell of cigars, the flesh of swinging cumbia, salsa, house and silence. The flesh of politicians, religious people, laity, of the tamale lady, masons, and illegal domestics. The flesh of parents and children, uncles, grandmothers, stepmothers and stepchildren. Flesh of separation and reunion. With this flesh the Divine Logos was so smitten that was not afraid to undergo the uncertainty of life, submitted to the will of wicked men, doubt and rejection for the love of this flesh. In this flesh came the Divine Word to take this flesh with him back to heaven, through the door he himself carved on Golgotha Mountain, taking a bit of all of us, the flesh of politicians, religious people, laity, of the tamale lady, masons, and illegal domestics. The flesh of parents and children, uncles, grandmothers, stepmothers and stepchildren. This flesh of drunks, drug addicts and people with money, now has found a home on at his right hand. He who could keep aloof, watching from above, from the safety of beginnings, He is the one who presided over the birth of this flesh, this reality of this world. He who is the light of all things came to our darkness, not as bewildered tourist, God came as an immigrant with no papers to live in this flesh and to suffer our fate in this flesh of life and death. He came to us, to the soul, and he planted there a perpetual yearning, an unmitigated desire for Him, keeping us permanently homeless until he receive us in his many mansions. Meanwhile we are still here, missing him, enjoying now this flesh as a side dish of sorts, after trying the food from Heaven, Here we seek the Divine Word in the stories of his first friends, we look for Him in his sacraments that he commanded us to keep, we seek him in the embrace of love, the peace we offer. We seek him while we serve the needy. And now, since the frightened shepherds and shouting angels Mary that meditative mother and Joseph concerned father Since that star of Bethlehem and those curious scholars carrying expensive gifts, since then, now our heart beats differently, the heart that beats in this flesh beats now with a new rhythm, a rhythm of heaven.