

II SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS– 3rd January 2021

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US - Biblical Commentary by Father Alberto Maggi OSM

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 were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God,^U who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

The liturgy of the first Sunday of this year 2021 opens with texts that are positive . The reading is the prologue of John’s gospel , that is, the first eighteen verses in which the evangelist manages to enclose, summarize and reformulate the whole gospel, so every single one word is full of meaning. Well, this prologue begins by correcting the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis, we know, begins with words “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*” Well the evangelist does not agree, and writes “*In the beginning was the Word...*” “word” in Greek being “*logos*” that has numerous meanings The logos in the Bible is the creative word that carries out God's plan in creation.

So this logos, this word, is God's plan that is realized in creation. The central verse of the whole prologue is the most important. In fact, the evangelist writes at verse 12 “*But to all who did receive him,..*” this project - that is, a man with the divine condition, this was God's plan for humanity “*... he gave the right to become children of God..*” Well, today's second reading is the best commentary on this beginning in John's prologue. We have it in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, with a text that, if understood, really changes the relationship with God and with others. Paul begins the letter to the Ephesians with a blessing to the Lord, he says he blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Spiritual does not mean ethereal, evanescent, but acting in the Spirit; because? “*..he chose us in him before*

the foundation of the world...” So, as the evangelist John wrote, that God in the beginning did not create heaven and earth, but, even before creating heaven and earth, there was this project on humanity, a man with the divine condition, and Paul says the same. So before the creation of the world he chose us.

We do not come into the world, to the light by chance, we come because God has chosen us. God first had yet to create the world, he thought of each of us because he wanted to manifest himself through each one of us in a new, original and creative form, he wanted to enrich creation with our presence. And he says that he chose us to be *"holy and blameless"*, (Ephesians 1, 4) meaning separated from all forms of evil, and immaculate before him. What does immaculate mean? God is in purity and the immaculate is the one who has no obstacles, no barriers to enter into communion with this God who is pure. What makes man impure in the Gospels, we know, is the evil that is voluntarily done to others.

But here the evangelist Paul continues, saying “... *he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ...*” (Ephesians 1, 5) The adoption to which Paul refers is not the institution as we know it, a welcome of a child, within a family, no; it refers to an institution juridical in vogue at that time, with which the ruler never left his kingdom as an inheritance to one of his sons, but he chose from among his officers, among his generals, the one he thought had the ability to carry on his reign and adopted him as a son. So it was the gesture with which normally an emperor chose someone to carry on his empire. We have, for example, in history emperors like Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius they were all adopted by the previous emperor.

So, what does this adoption mean for adopted children? That God, the creator, has such high esteem in each of us, trusts each of us so much that he believes us capable of collaborating in his action creator. For Jesus, God did not create the world, but God needs each of us to keep creating this world. Then the passage from the gospel and the wish we give each other in this beginning of the year is to understand, welcome this project of a God who created us to create, we are alive to enliven others and then we love to make others capable of welcoming love.