

Sermon
St. Mary's Nanoose
December 25, 2016 - Christmas Day 10am
John 1:1-14

We have these expressions: "I want to have a word with you," and, "I'll give you my word." And as the Beatles said so eloquently, "Say the word I'm thinking of
Have you heard the word is love?
It's so fine, It's sunshine
It's the word, love
In the beginning I misunderstood
But now I've got it, the word is good
Spread the word and you'll be free
Spread the word and be like me
Spread the word I'm thinking of
Have you heard the word is love?"

We sing the word. We whisper the word. We create with the word. And the word brings us to clarity, truth, hope and peace. Or.... it can do the opposite. God gave us the freedom to use language to either create wonderful things and enhance life, or to debase and tear it down.

Jesus was the Word. The Word created by God and of being with God. The Word that never ends. This reading we just heard from John is such profound poetry that tries to express the inexpressible. And in its attempt, we are given a sense of the immensity and mystery of

God. God coming to life into time and space; compressed into the shape of language. Language bursting with potential, power and beauty.

The Word, then, is something so much bigger than what it is able to express. The word is everything, and it is at the same time, a part of the whole. Both things at once. A building block and a full sentence or a thought. Everything is contained in the Word. The light that overcomes the darkness. The source of beauty, truth, life and death – all contained in the Word. Language is powerful. This much is clear!

Jesus is the Word. Jesus, the son of God, who comes into the world to bring the good news. News of peace, love and truth. The one who sees clearly into the hearts of people and speaks directly to their situation; meeting them in their moment of need, and showing them the way to return to right relationship with God.

Through the stories we listen to, the words he used, the things he did, his life pointed the way to true joy. He gives people the power to become children of God.

Yet the free will God created in us, makes it possible that we wouldn't even recognize God when he enters our world in a shape like our own. "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him," Johns reports. How incredible is that? We don't recognize our own creator and sustainer!

It seems that we have to be in relationship with God to be able to recognize God. That is our part. To be aware enough to notice

when our hearts start pounding when we hear the truth. To be sensitive enough to notice when our hearts are moved when we see beauty. To be humble enough to be touched by the wonders of Creation. To be compassionate enough to care when others, created beings like ourselves, suffer.

God has spoken to us and continues to speak to us through Scripture. But God's voice is not limited to Scripture alone. God speaks in words and in silence and is expressed through everything God created. Every moment of every day is an opportunity to see and hear God. Because in the absence of truth, beauty and wonder; we witness the absence of God and experience the pain of that absence. And when we hear poetry or kind words or passionate appeals for justice, we witness the presence of God and feel gratitude and joy.

How we use our words either cooperates with God's mission of Love in the world, or works against and abuses God's offering? Our words either resonate and enhance, or our words deaden and destroy God's divine goodness.

Today we celebrate God's coming into the world as a tiny, vulnerable baby. Today are we awed by this miraculous birth that changed the world, and our lives, forever?

This Christmas, as with every Christmas, we are invited to welcome this vulnerable new life into our hearts, our homes, and our world. And we are encouraged to grow up as the Jesus did, in right relationship with God and so become more and more able to share

the Word with joy and love. We are children of a loving God, learning how to live in the power of the Divine presence.

The power of language to inspire and move us is witness to God's presence in the world. I'd like end by sharing the following poem that expresses the arrival of God in the poet Antonio Machado's life:

"Last Night as I was Sleeping" (1875-1939)

So this morning as we celebrate the birth of the Word among us; Jesus the Christ, let us give glory to God in our singing, our prayers and our silence as we receive communion and acknowledge the Word made flesh. Amen.