

Sermon
St. Mary Nanoose Bay
December 24/25, 2017 – Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
Luke 2:1-20 & John 1:1-14

Try for a moment and imagine the infinite? It's impossible, right?

Yet, in our Christmas story we hear how the infinite became finite.... how God became human in order to show us the nature and goal of God.

And did God become human in the way so many of us were raised to believe God looks and acts? as an elderly gray-haired man, stern and remote, up above us, impossibly resting on the clouds, looking down and intervening when it pleases him?

No, we have the stories this Christmas season of how God enters human history in the most human way, the most miraculous way really, through birth and into the arms of a very human and very young mother.

God arrives in our midst as a vulnerable infant. He had to be either male or female, and God arrived as a completely dependent tiny boy.

The infinite compressed into a finite existence. God who is born among us and who will be executed by us. Talk about being vulnerable.

This infant, as are all infants, completely dependent on the attention and care of those around him to flourish. Like all children, this infant who is God among us will have to learn how to walk and talk and become more dependent. This child who John tells us is the Word will learn to use words as we all do, to either build up the kingdom or tear it down. This child who will grow into the man will express the infinite, the unimaginable, in ways we can see and experience. His actions will always point beyond himself to the One who creates, sustains and embraces everything we can see and everything that is beyond our ability to express in words.

This God become human is really a sacrament. And what is a sacrament? Come on all you former Catholics! – an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual divine grace. And that grace being the Trinity itself!

So given this image or expression of God as an infant, totally dependent on us, a God who is not static but learning, growing, engaging with life, why do we insist on maintaining this other image of God who is remote, judgmental, and static?

Could it be that we don't want to care that much? We don't want the responsibility? We don't want to have to stand by, like Mary his mother did, and witness suffering we can do little about?

Engaging with a God who is vulnerable and needs our care and attention is the kind of responsibility required of a parent. And after coming here directly after spending two days with my grandnephews who are lovely, but very active and needful of pretty constant attention, I can see why we would opt for a conception of God who is independent of us, who is in control, and who can do very well for himself, thank you very much.

Of course our God is not just a baby, that's such a limited view of something bigger than we can imagine. But our God is all things and this image of God coming as an infant gives us an insight into the human condition. And I would suggest that this entails a level of caring for all that God has created that we might not have entertained

before. All that is finite, is made from the infinite. All life is a miracle. And we are all vulnerable and dependent, on God and on each other. And as we grow up and learn how to talk and interact with each other, we need to take care, very good care of each other. Because with words and actions we can create something other than what God intends for us. Our words and actions can create and sustain life, or they can do the opposite.

So today, as we celebrate the birth of God among us, the Word made flesh, let us do so as co-creators, people who have been given the awesome gift of being able to care, nurture and bless the life that comes into our midst.

To open ourselves to be vulnerable like Him, to become, as he suggested, like children again, full of joy, spontaneous creativity and love for Creation. And not only for what has been created and will be, but for the One who created all that is. The One that Jesus loved to the very end, our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The beginning and the end, and all the life between! Today we focus on the beginning, and all the promise of new life. Because today new life has come amongst us, and we know that as we nurture new

beginnings and new opportunities, we too, point to the One who loves us so much that the infinite became finite so as to show us the way of love, the possibilities of love and the full expression of love. And as we love with courage and conviction, we bring more of the infinite into our finite and hurting world. And the miracle of life continues to amaze and humble us.

Amen.