



CHRISTMAS DAY

Sermon preached by the Reverend Carol Cole Flanagan on Christmas Day, December 25, 2007 at Christ Church, Detroit.

John tells us that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). This pre-existent Word of God was part of the very creation of the world, and brought both life and light into our midst. Best of all, “the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (v. 14). The Word of God became human in Jesus Christ and lived among us, so that we could see the perfect grace and truth of God at work in human life. In Jesus, God’s Word is not just 66 biblical books spread out over a thousand-plus pages; at heart it is a living, breathing, loving human being.

Jesus is not a Word we sit down and read but a Word we watch and hear and imitate and follow. No form of instruction could possibly be more user-friendly. To follow this Word-made-flesh is to accept that Jesus is at the heart of our interpretation of Scripture. Does a particular interpretation conform to the teaching, activity, example, life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

Pick a difficult problem, any difficult problem: capital punishment, abortion, welfare reform. Then plug in a popular remedy and then ask yourself, “Does this conform to the example of Jesus Christ? Does it support the great commandment to love the Lord with all your heart, and soul and mind - and to love your neighbor as yourself? Does it spread the love given by God, commanded by God and shown by Jesus?”

There aren’t many people today who are willing to slow down long enough to read the fine print of various owner’s manuals, care guides, troubleshooting Web sites, and how-to directories. And it’s equally true that there aren’t many among us who are going to take the time to do a careful study of the rules and regulations of the Old Testament books of the law.

That’s why we need the Word made flesh. That’s why we need someone to come down and pull us out of trouble, save us from our sins, lead us by the hand and inspire us to follow the way of God.