

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

LOOK

Take a moment to linger at the manger before the Christmas season is done. What do you notice there? What do you want to take with you?

BOOK

John 1:1-18

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept

him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And 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.

¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

- 1) God 'put skin on and moved into the neighborhood' (Eugene Peterson, The Message). With the incarnation, God is no longer an abstract principle. How does the life of Jesus teach us how to live?
- 2) How does the incarnation inform our relationship with God? Does the fact that we in this century do not experience Jesus in flesh on earth affect the impact of the incarnation?
- 3) What does it mean for us to be given power to become 'children of God'?
- 4) Discuss the importance of light. Why do you think John chose that image to describe God come to earth?

TOOK

What parts of your life need light right now?

Is it hard to let the light in? Why?

How will you let the light of Christ sink into your dark places?

This light is meant to be shared. How will you share the light Christ brings?

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoners,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman