

Louder than Words

[Text - John 1:1-18]

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Many years ago, long before e-mail, Instagram, and texting, a young couple from Ohio decide to get married. Shortly after their engagement, the man learns that he's being transferred by his company to work in India for one year. Because it's just a temporary assignment, they don't move-up their wedding plans. And because he knows he won't have the time or money to fly back to see her, the man promises his fiancée that he will faithfully write to her every day - which he does. The following year when he returns, his fiancée regretfully informs him that she can no longer marry him. She admits that while he was away, she started seeing another man on a regular basis; initially just enjoyed talking with him, but eventually developed a strong attraction to him and fell in love.

"So, who is he?" the man asks.

The woman replies, "He's...the mailman."

While there's a lot to be said for written correspondence, there's really nothing quite like being physically present and actively engaged, to strengthen our connections with others. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, writes about how - throughout the ages - the Holy One seeks to convey a message of hope, compassion and peace, through the of the teachings of the Hebrew Law and the words of the Prophets. "But when the fulness of time had arrived," Paul writes, "God sent God's own son...so that we all might receive adoption as God's beloved sons and daughters."

The Christian faith proclaims that what the *written* words of Scripture could not fully convey, is brought to life through the *Incarnation* - the Word made flesh who dwells among us. In the person of Jesus Christ, the Divine Reality is fully embodied in human form, showing us the authentic nature of Divine love and grace. In this Christmas season, you and I - along with Christians throughout the world - gather to contemplate and celebrate that Divine love in human form. We do so by reading Scripture, singing carols, lighting candles, and by raising our praise and prayers to the Holy One. However, we not only gather to *remember* the birth of the Christ Child, but more importantly to re-claim and re-incarnate the personal message and mission of Christ in our world today.

Just as the Divine Word of Holy Love is embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, that same message continues to take-on life and meaning in and through our *own* acts of kindness and compassion, welcome and inclusion. And in a world which often seems over-run with violence and hatred, divisiveness and fear, the Christmas message of "Peace on earth, goodwill to all" is vitally important.

In many ways, the world into which Jesus is born is not unlike our own. The rich and powerful simply do as they please, while the poor and vulnerable are pushed aside and completely discounted. Yet Jesus' response to the world's pain and brokenness isn't to angrily complain about it, but rather to actively infuse it with Divine compassion and power - to personally touch and transform people's hurting lives, so that they might be relieved and redeemed. Jesus' undying trust in the love and goodness of the Holy One, gives him the confidence to take-on the powerful forces of fear and hatred, suffering and death - even though he knows that by doing so, he himself will be subjected to them. The Good News that Jesus brings, is that in spite of the worst that may come our way, the Divine Spirit of Life is always with us; and there is nothing in life - or death - that can ever separate us from the Eternal Love of our One Creative Source.

This is the message which you and I are called to celebrate and to share - an unshakable, *Living* Expression of Divine love and grace! And just as we receive that message through the integrated words and actions of Jesus Christ, we also receive from Jesus the ideal method for conveying that message. In the person of Jesus, the Divine Word "became flesh and dwelt among us...full of grace and truth." And if this is how the Divine Intelligence chooses to bring the message of Good News to our world - as a personal,

physical, face-to-face Presence - then that seems like a pretty good method for you and me to utilize as well.

When you and I truly comprehend that the message we share is one of abundant, self-giving love, then we will be inspired and empowered to convey that love to others - in both our words *and* our actions. We will seek-out opportunities to express Divine Love in very human and humane ways. For while the *words* of our message are certainly important, without genuine action to back them up, those words simply ring hollow.

The marvelous message of Christmas reminds us that Divine Word and Action *a/ways* go hand-in-hand. It also reminds us that you and I can't fully or freely share the gift of Divine Love, until it has taken hold of our own lives and has been born anew within us. For when you and I are truly touched and transformed by this tremendous Good News, we will *want* to tell others, to show others, and to invite others to join us on this wonderful journey of faith.

We do have *Good News* to share! And it is in and through our sharing, and our caring, that this News grows and deepens and takes hold - in our own lives and in the lives of those people you and I encounter every day. In this Holy Season, as we invite that Divine Love to be born once again within us, may we be inspired to fully embrace and embody the True Christmas message - of Peace on Earth, Goodwill to *All!*