The Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas

Gospel text (*Jn* 1:1-18): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth

John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me. '" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

"The Word became flesh"

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Today is the last day of the year. Often, mixed feelings —even contradictory ones— can be found in our hearts at this time. It is as though a sample of the different moments we have lived and those we would

like to have lived make themselves present in our memories. Today's Gospel can help us pour them out, in order to start the New Year with strength.

“The Word was with God (...). All things came to be through him” (Jn 1:1.3). When taking inventory of the year, it is necessary to think that every day we have lived was a gift. Because of that, and whatever the profit might be, it is necessary to thank God for every minute of the year.

The gift of life is not whole, though. We are needy. Because of that, today's Gospel gives us the key words: “to welcome, to accept”. “And the Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14). Accept God Himself! God, turning into man, puts Himself within our reach. “To welcome,” means to open our doors, to allow Him to enter our lives, to be in our projects, in those acts, which fill our days. To what degree are we welcoming God, letting Him into our lives?

“The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world” (Jn 1:9). Accepting Jesus means to allow Him to question us. Letting His criteria influence our more intimate thoughts as well as our social and work performance. Let's reconcile our actions to His!

“Through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race” (Jn 1:4). Faith is more, however, than a few criteria. It is our life embedded into Life. It is not only effort —which indeed it is, but above all, it is gift and grace— life received at the heart of the Church, especially through the sacraments. What is the place of the sacraments in my Christian life?

“But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name” (Jn 1:12). What a passionate project for the year that we are about to start!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Let us always proceed not according to our own will, nor according to our own mind, but even as He has chosen to teach them by the Holy Scriptures.” (Saint Hippolytus)

- “In concluding this year, in giving thanks and in asking for forgiveness, it will be good for us to ask for the grace to be able to walk in freedom.” (Francis)

- “Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father by his relationship to his only Son. For this reason the apostles confess Jesus to be the Word: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (Jn 1:1).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 240-241)