

Rev. Donato Infante
Christmas 2018

Merry Christmas. On behalf of our pastor, Father Bob Grattaroti, I welcome all of you here this evening, whether you are just visiting us for the day or are here every Sunday, you are welcome here because this is your home.

There is another home, one in Nazareth, the home believed to belong to a family who had a young girl named Miriam. That home has had a large church built over it, for it is the site where the angel appeared to that young girl, Mary, and informed her that she was to be the Mother of the Savior. Written on the wall there is the inscription, “**Verbum caro hic factum est**”

The Word became Flesh, says the Gospel of John, and so in that house, in that church in Nazareth, it says, The Word Became Flesh “hic” *here*. Each year thousands of Christians go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to walk where Christ walked and see where he lived.

He came in the darkest time of the year, a Light coming into the Darkness. A world full of heartache from death and sickness and suffering, so much of which is a result of sin. None of that has changed. Very often we think that the world would only be better if (insert a simple solution to the problem here)...Maybe you have even had a conversation where you remarked to someone, “We are fixing all the world’s problems,” as if it were only that simple. But *we* cannot fix the world. We cannot save the world. The darkness of the world starts in our hearts. As Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, who suffered terribly in the Soviet Gulags wrote, “If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?” We think we can fix the world but what’s wrong with the world is each one of us. By Original Sin, we are broken beyond our own repair, we are told, “In the beginning” of Genesis. But that’s not the end of the story. Christ comes into the darkness of the world, the darkness of our hearts, to fix us. John tells us about a new creation, starting off like Genesis, “in the beginning.” The Nativity is Good News indeed!

He came in Nazareth to save us, but not just there. He still comes. He comes in the appearance of bread here in Charlton, and Sturbridge, and Oxford and at every Mass. *Verbum caro hic factum est*. The word became flesh here. So very often people comment that they get nothing out of going to Church. Recently a Baptist friend of mine told me that when people say that to him he says, “Do you attend Church like you attend the movies or you go to the gym?” Most people tell him, “Like the movies. I’m there to watch something.” He tells them, “Nothing can make up for the hard-work of faith. You are putting in something at church, worshipping, that

you might be built up over-time to go change the world. It's supposed to be like the gym." Each Mass we are fed on the Word of God, by listening to it and eating it in the Eucharist. The divine life pulses through our veins that our hearts might be transformed and that we might be sent to be the light of the world that Christ says his disciples are meant to be, that you might spread the joy of God's coming, the peace of the prince of peace, the love of God, the only love that can change the world. *Verbum caro hic factum est.* The Word was made flesh here, that you heart might be transformed, that your life might be transformed, to be a fragrant offering to God. May God bless you this Christmas and in the year to come. Amen.