

# Second Sunday of Christmas

## GOD WITH A HEART

John 1:1-18

## Second Sunday of Christmas

## Analysis by Lori A. Cornell

In 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.

---

## **DIAGNOSIS: Heartless**

### **Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *A Cloud of Unknowing***

So many words, and nearly every one of them makes a claim to the truth. So why trust what one voice says, (even if that voice claims to be God), just because he says that his word is special-important enough to be his own offspring? Trust no one, right? After all, who can actually know the truth? Better cynical than a fool.

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Heartless***

But such lack of trust leaves a person heartless. If you "trust no one," you have no one; which means you love no one. Oh, sure, you might have some temporal (read "temporary") relationships; but, as that earthly reference indicates, those relationships don't last. And that means that if you put your trust in creatures or creation, you are bound to end up empty handed. And, worse, unaware of your beginnings, (for the sake of simplicity, unaware of your "creator"), you will be heartless (as in anchorless). So, even if the "no one" you refuse to trust is God, and you still have a relationship with the world, your love won't last; like a plant without roots, you will eventually wither.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *The Unbearable Lightness of God***

Even when we think we are enlightened about life-that we don't need God's help to make sense of life, God shines a light on that fallacy. God's light shines into our darkness, and our

darkness cannot overcome it (v. 5) But that means that without God we remain in the dark, and without God's light we have no life (v. 4). We are dead-perhaps walking dead for the mean time-but ultimately, dead. No light equals no life.

## **PROGNOSIS: God with a Heart**

**Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution)** : *Christ, the Bearer of Darkness*

But here's the wonderful catch in this conundrum: If the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it, then that means that the light prevails. But not without having to consume the darkness-which is what Jesus does on the cross, consume all our darkness, so that we might have his light. That is why John asserts: "It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (v. 18).

**Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Problem)** : *A Heart for God*  
Without him we are only the walking dead, with him we understand from where we have come (he is our beginning), and to where we are going, and who lights our way: Christ. Christ's fullness enlightens our existence-you can call that enlightenment "faith," if you will; but not just an intellectual enlightenment, a whole-self enlightenment, as in "filling us up," or "christening." Such filling begins with a word (from the Word) in baptism, but continues every time the Word speaks to us: He fills us up with grace upon grace, so that we may grow in him-our head, hands, and heart, called to do his bidding.

**Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Problem)** : *A Cloud of Witnesses*

This fullness is not something we experience alone. Instead, because Christ's life is the light of all people, others-who bear Christ's light-who have a heart for God, join us. For centuries the Church has called this gathering "a cloud of witnesses." God has joined us to others in his light, so that in

a world that spins out many untruths, we can rest assured that we have a God with a heart, and it is he to whom we witness.