

December 25, 2006
Christmas

By Father Charles Bowes

Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14

God took teeth and is as close as our own hearts.

As a kid I recall a popular Christmas song: “All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth, my two front teeth, my two front teeth. All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth so I could wish you merry Christmas.” The song was sung by someone lisping along, dramatizing how helpful those teeth would one day be.

I hadn’t thought of that song for years until just the other day when I came across a poet who described the Feast of Christmas as that in which “God took teeth.” And I thought, what a great image – that earthy, human reality, part of everyone’s life, a rite of passage we each experience. God, in Jesus the Christ, is every bit as we are – so enfleshed, needing two front teeth to wish us merry Christmas.

And not only is Jesus, the Son of God, so like us – we are like him. Each time we experience the human, we are in touch with God, in touch with what God treasures – the lost teeth of childhood, but also all the passages of life. Each and every dimension of the human, because of Jesus, becomes the vehicle for God to be near – everything, sickness and health, triumph and disaster, relationships lost and discovered.

I think Christmas can be so surrounded by the fantastic and the unusual, so infused with sentiment, that we can miss the radical and simple truth that God took teeth, is one of us, and we are brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, and death is forever swallowed up in a life altogether new. The human is made a point of

contact with God almighty. The death and resurrection surrounding Jesus become our own dignity – peace and good will our inheritance. Christmas is the final telling of a story of a love that excels all love, entering into our lives in a most intimate way.

Christmas is a feast which some Catholic mystics have called “beholding the sun at midnight.” Sunlight reveals the beauty of the earth, and it is brightest in the summer. As light wanes until Christmas around the winter solstice, we feel more and more the need to seek the light within ourselves. Like the cosmic journey of the sun across the heavens, God invites us into a spiritual journey culminating at Christmas when the Light of the World is born and destined to shine across the ages. Christmas is that festival of light, that promise that we shall never need to fear living in darkness, for “the people who lived in darkness have seen a great light, upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom, a light has shone.” (Isaiah 9:1)

As the poet said, at Christmas “God took teeth.” God is now among us as human and is irrevocably tied to our lives forever. In Christ, “heaven and earth have kissed, justice and peace have met.”

Let us pray: Now you are never far from us, God, having become so fully one of us. Do draw closer each day. Fill us with joy in your embrace through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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close as our own hearts.