

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Dec 31st 2013

At the closing of the year it is a good thing to look back, even as we continue to move forward. It is good to look in our rear-view mirror to see our experiences of God in our lives during the year we are closing and to reflect on them. Yes, even as we keep on driving and looking to the road ahead.

It is interesting that at the end of the year the gospel reading brings us back to the absolute beginning: In the beginning... As the year's end invites us to look back on the completed year with gratitude, the prologue of John's gospel invites us to look back as far as "back" goes: In the beginning... (beginning of creation of course, since God and the Word have no beginning). And, looking at the beginning, the reading gives us a capsule summary of the mystery of Christ, the Word.

The Word was in the beginning, but the Word did not stay there statically. The Word is now. The Word, who became flesh and (literally) pitched his tent among us, as we have just celebrated at Christmas, remains with us: I will be with you to the end of time [Mt. 28:20]

We glance at the past year in our rear-view mirror, but keeping our sight on the present, as we keep moving into our future to be made of an uninterrupted sequence of presents. It is a moment of both gratitude and hope: gratitude even as we recognize experiences we regret and hope even as we perhaps fear possible experiences that could hurt us. Knowing all along that we are never alone, because the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us, the Word who gave us his word that I will be with you to the end of time.

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