

CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL ASSISTANTS, SFO - OCEANIA

c/- Star of the Sea Friary
45 Victoria St, Waverley NSW
Australia 2024

Phone:(61-2) 9369 9361
Fax: (61-2) 9389 4067
E-mail:cschafer@franciscans.org.au

Year 9, No54

Monthly Spiritual Message

May 2009-97

A Reflection on the Angelus Prayer (Part Three)

In this last reflection on the Angelus, I will reflect on a few verses from John's Gospel. I cannot do full justice to this very rich Gospel and thus my reflection, albeit short, will hopefully give us some insights into the mystery and humility of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for this Community of Divinity works solely together for love of one another and for our salvation. In their love they reflect their willingness to share their most intimate love and life with us. And how do they do this sharing? One of them, out of love for the Father, accepts the greatest command of love in a purely divine setting which will be played out in the history of a "...chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet 2:9). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). This is our subject for reflection this month. John uses this "Word" to give Jesus a name before he became flesh. I have an interesting question for you. What was the name of Jesus before he became flesh?

John writes about Jesus in his Prologue, "*In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was God and the Word was with God*" (Jn 1:1). I cannot get into the exegesis of this wonderful word that he has given to us. However, allow me to share some of my ruminations with you. John's use of this "Word" unravels something of the mystery of Jesus' life before he became like us. Jesus was the "Word". Why didn't John use another word to describe Jesus' life and activity beforehand? Good question. Let us look further into this "Word." It was "...through this Word that all things were made" (Jn 1:3). This "Word" is a living Spiritual Divine Being, how can he be otherwise, "*In the Beginning was the Word, the Word was with God...*" This "Word" communicates with Someone else and itself receives and considers this communication that it receives from this Other. This Other is Divine, is filled with creative love and shares it with the other who is equal in substance and divinity, otherwise how can a lower being receive the fullness of divinity and not be destroyed or at best overtaken and lose its own identity?

John tells us that "*In the Beginning was the Word...*" this "Word" coexists with the Unbegotten One, who loves and shares all his divinity with his Word and the Word responds back and reciprocates his love with the Unbegotten One. We can ask a question about how this Community of Love lives and communicates? But the more important thing is this divine Community exists because he spoke to us in our human language.

"Jesus" was the name revealed to Mary and to Joseph by an Angel before their Son was born. This name Jesus means "*Saviour, for he will save his people...*" (Mt 1:21).

Christ” was the title that referred to the long awaited “Messiah” of the Jewish nation, who was to save his people through his life, death and Resurrection. When Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, told him that he had met Jesus, he said (Jn 1:41) “*We have found the Messiah... (And John added “Which means the Christ.”)*”

Why was Jesus called “The Word” instead of the Thought or the Feeling or even a deed? How would it sound and how clear would the reading from John sound if we used the word deed? There is a difference between deed and the Word. The Word is clearer and communicates more, while ‘deed’ can be more ambiguous. If we think our words at times are unclear or misunderstood, our deeds can seem even more dubious and uncertain. That is why we more often explain ourselves using words.

If we use the word ‘thought’ instead of “Word” this may convey a more inward approach and often remains silent. However the “Word” is generally seen as moving outwards from the thinker towards the other person. Why? To establish some form of understandable communication between two persons, to share something. I think that John wanted us to conceive of the Son of God made flesh as existing both for the sake of dialogue between the Father and the Son and for the sake of appearing in history as his reality in human life and language and making the Father’s Presence visible to all humanity. How else would a *Divinity make itself known, understood, approachable, loved, and allow its creatures to respond in like manner to Itself?* We are greatly encouraged by John’s witness as well as the apostles, “*...Something which has existed since the beginning, that we have heard and we have seen, with our own eyes, that we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word, who is life, this is our subject*” (1 Jn1:1)

John Spiteri OFM Cap OFM
National Assistant SFO – Oceania

**Regional Assistants are requested to distribute this Monthly Message
to all local Assistants of our Order in the Regional Fraternity.**