

John 1:1-18

Jan. 2, 2022

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Merry Christmas! And Happy Secular New year!

As you know, the church already started the New Year back on November 28. It's always a bit confusing during Advent because the Church stuff uses the year that we haven't actually crossed over into yet. So, this past Advent was Advent 2022 even though it was still 2021 on every other calendar.

But, in a way, isn't it cool that the Church precedes the rest of the world into the future? That's kind of interesting anyway, isn't it? It's total God first imagery. God acts first and then we follow behind.

It's really not that different with what is happening meteorologically. Even through the days have already started to get longer, the temperature is actually getting colder.

The World is always trailing behind the Word – the Word of God that is. God's creating Word.

So, I guess that when we consider that lag time that is obvious in Creation, we shouldn't ever try to rush God. "Hurry up God! I want this now!"

It's like steering the Titanic with that tiny little rudder. There is a lag between God's action and our realization of it, and sometimes we run into an ice berg, but we know that's not the end of the story.

We proclaim that God was acting, is acting, and will continue to act eternally – not only in history, but also universally and interpersonally as well. As Christians that is what we proclaim, but as John tells us, the World has a hard time seeing God in action among them.

These days, everything has some sort of scientific reasoning, which is great. I have a Master's degree in Biology. I love science. But, the tricky thing with science is that we assume what we can observe is the truth.

It's only recently that science has began to admit that our mind is not separate from our body, something the Church has always proclaimed – well mostly. There are some that don't, but Jesus' message is mind and body are one. That is the Jewish understanding from the very beginning.

Now, the mind body connection may seem obvious to you. The mind is obviously part of the body, but for a long time it was thought that the mind was just observing the body and not impacted by it. That the mind was the ghost who was driving the ship.

I can tell you from personal experience with gastroparesis that what happens with my stomach definitely impacts my mind, and it's not the other way around. Anyone who has taken medication knows this. Anyone who deal with hormones knows this.

I was at the bank and some stuff happened that got me really upset and I went spiraling. I was at my kitchen sink when I had a "Moonstruck" moment and heard Cher say – "Snap out of it!" That's not the truth. And so I went in the back yard and looked at the flowers and played with the cats.

The truth is that God is in Creation, that natural world - always has been and always will be. God doesn't separate God's self from Creation, so why do we? Why do we?

Banks and other institutions are human institutions, we hope they do God's work, but sometimes they don't make God obvious, because they put us in the role of earning and deserving. That's consumerism. That is not God. God gives first and loves us unconditionally. That's the good news we proclaim.

So, why do we separate ourselves from Creation? Well – it's always convenient to blame it on the Greek philosophers, namely the Gnostics, who held that creation was bad and the soul was good, and therefore the soul was trying to get out of the body. Unfortunately that couldn't happen until the person died.

That is kind of sad, isn't it? It makes me sad. Creation is good and wonderful and fun. If we think the mind is trying to break out of creation, it causes all sorts of problem, especially thinking that it's ok to destroy God's good creation, because it is bad. But, it's not bad. If it were bad, would God come into it?

God loves Creation. God loves humans. God loves you – all of you – with all of your physical and mental issues – whatever they may be. God's not afraid of them or ashamed of them.

God loves them and Jesus experienced them in his birth, life, torture, crucifixion, and death. He then took all of that with him in the ascension and sits at God's right hand as a permanent reminder of God's beloved creation, and through the Holy Spirit, God continues to be with us here and now.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it! The darkness did not overcome it!! It didn't! We see that in the natural world as the days get longer again.

Through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, God is with us always and we receive grace upon grace. We constantly receive good from God's created world. We constantly receive God's love, mercy, compassion, and companionship.

God loves Creation. God loves us. And God loves that we are in a relationship with God – a relationship that requires our bodies, which includes our minds. They travel together – just try and separate them. It can't be done, because without a body we have no mind.

During Christmas we celebrate that God chose to fully inhabit a human body as a proclamation of God's love for us – a love that has to be heard through our ears, proclaimed through our mouths, delivered by our feet, distributed through our hands, and it requires all of our internal make up to carry that out, and it requires us to interact with Creation and be good stewards of it.

As we travel through 2022, remember God incarnate – remember that God is traveling with you. God is all around in the goodness of Creation, which includes the entirety of human bodies. Remember God's love for you as an entire human being – all parts from top to bottom and everything in between.

As my friend Bogart likes to say – God don't make junk!

If you want a New Year's Resolution, resolve to love your body – all of it. Embrace it as God embraces us and use it to embrace others, and the rest of Creation.

All of Creation is good and when we love it, we love God who is in the World, and we point those who cannot see God to God.

Happy 2022! May it not be 2020 too – as in 2020 also or again – but a year of growth as we seek out God's love in the World, Creation, and ourselves, because God is here.

Thanks be to God! Amen.