

## Son

25 12 16

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him  
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit.

Our text may be found in today's gospel from St Luke, chapter 2, verse 7:

**'And she gave birth to her first-born son . . .'**

Happy Christmas. Joyeux Noël. May today be a good day, a great day for you. For us, as Christians, Christmas is an important day in the story of our faith because today we are celebrating the fact of the Incarnation, the fact that the Word has become flesh, the fact that the Son of God has been born of Mary who wraps her first-born son in cloth, then lays him gently down in the manger of the stable where he was born – for there was no room for him, for them, in the inn.

This morning, let's simply concentrate on one word – 'son'. Jesus is the first-born son of Mary. Jesus is the stepson of Joseph. Jesus is the Son of God. So what does it mean for Jesus to be a son, the son of Mary, of Joseph, of God ?

To be Mary's first-born son means that Jesus is human, that he's taken on our flesh, that he like us is enfleshed, that he's in the flesh, fully what it is to be human: that he can feel pleasure and pain; be well, be ill; live and ultimately die. For Mary, to be pregnant, with one of her embryos fertilised by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, means that Mary uniquely knows through her body the presence of God in her life. To my mind, if we are to think of Mary as immaculate, then her purity, her sinlessness, her state of grace, comes not from the time of her conception in the womb of her mother, Anne, but it is rooted in the fact of the real presence of God in her own womb in the form of the foetus that will be born as her son, Jesus. To be immaculate is not a necessary precondition to being the mother of God but a consequence.

To be Joseph's step-son means that Jesus is adopted. Joseph loves Mary. He was deeply hurt with the thought that Mary, his fiancée, was pregnant with another man's child. But Joseph heard the word of the angel and he, like Mary, was willing to do the will of God. If Jesus was loved by the man who was his mother's husband, then Joseph is an example to us all of how love should fully inform our lives and behaviour.

To be God's Son, means that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. Our unique Christian insight into the nature and character of God is our understanding, our belief, that the one God whom we worship is also Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To be the Son of God means that God in Jesus Christ is a present expression of deity in the world: the face of God in a human form that we can see;

the voice of God which we can hear; the finger of God pointing us the way home to God. Jesus, is as the prophet Isaiah foretells, Emmanuel, God with us.

And so today, Christmas Day, let me leave you with this one word – ‘son’. ‘Son’ has such a rich resonance, such a wealth of meaning. But, essentially, just reflect on the thought that through the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, through faith in him, we may all be sons and daughters of God.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist*

*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

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