

“God great and God tiny” John 1:1-18

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. ⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

“¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.”

When we heard today’s Scripture readings, from the Old Testament, and from Paul’s letter to Ephesians, and from the gospel according John, it seemed that in this first Sunday of the New Year our Lord really wants to flood us with His grace, with His abundant Gospel, with His promises, with His love.

These texts are so rich, they speak about our God’s nature so eloquently that it is difficult to decide which of His promises or deeds to meditate upon. There are simply too many of them.

All of them totally undeserved for us. But this is what kind of God He is. He cares for us not because we deserve it, but because He loves us and wants fully transform us and our lives by His abounding love.

As we today read prologue to the gospel according John, we could take a look what John tells us about this prodigally gracious God. How he describes Him. On this we’ll focus today in our meditations on God’s Word.

When we read different gospels, we can see that each of evangelists has chosen a little different emphasis. Thus Mark begins his gospel account from Jesus baptism. That’s where he picks up.

Luke makes a little step back in time and begins with angel visiting Mary and announcing that she will become pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Then there are a little bit about Jesus early years.

Matthew, and we discussed it recently, in the beginning of his gospel account traces back Jesus origin to the king David and to the father of Israel, Abraham. We can see how different gospel accounts go further and further back in time. Until we get to the gospel according John.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

What a majestic introduction! “In the beginning...” Where else we have read this phrase? Yes, that’s right, in Genesis. These are the very first words in the Bible. “In the beginning...” Speaking about creation of everything, about creation of all that is, about creation of time, matter, space, energy, countless galaxies, life, and all that exists.

“The Word was in the beginning and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” So, where is the beginning of Jesus story? There is a widespread misunderstanding that the Gospel of the Lord has its beginnings just two millennia ago with this teacher Jesus from Nazareth, one of many great teachers of humanity. It’s simply not true. John shows where the true beginning of Jesus story is.

“The Word was with God and the Word was God.” “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” This puts Jesus Christ, the Word of God, in totally different category. Doesn’t it? Doesn’t sound like He is only teacher, whatever influential one might be.

As John put it “all things were made through Him.” All things were made through Him! Apostle Paul adds to it: “All things were created ... for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Col 1:16-17)

Lift up your eyes to the sky, look around in creation, all of this, all of this, and by all is meant all, including us, are created by Him, for Him, and in Him are hold together. “In him was life” ... meaning – that He is the source of life, from Him we keep receiving it every minute.

Today humanity has accumulated a lot of knowledge. This has helped us to realize things our fathers didn’t know. Now we can look at the sky and know that there are billions of galaxies, but ... these are just numbers for us, infinitely large numbers.

That there are stars which are as large as orbit of the Earth around the Sun. Incredible greatness, incomprehensible vastness. And we, a tiny little speck, or as one famous astrophysicist called the Earth, a 'little pale dot'.

Yes, this is what we know today about this Universe. What conclusions we can make when we know how tiny we are? There are people who look at this indescribable majesty and conclude that - how can God Creator, if there is one, could possibly pay any attention to us, to this tiny planet, to these tiny creatures called humans. They adore the majesty and beauty of God's creation, but often reject a very existence of the Creator.

May be a little family analogy can help us to see, how foolish it is to make such conclusions. Just think for a while about person or persons whom you love the most, spouse, children, parents, siblings. Now think, what could you be ready to give them, if you had unlimited possibilities?

Is there anything you wouldn't? Think how much would you be willing to do for them, to make them happy, if you had infinite resources and power? Sky is the limit... but if sky wasn't the limit?

Now, please, think for a while, you have this person, or persons, who are so dear to you, probably dearer than your own life; parents, you can think about your children - what would you agree to exchange them for? [2] For island, for continent, for planet, for galaxy? Imagine you can have you own galaxy with millions of stars... in exchange to ... your children, or other loved one!

All these things are much, much larger than your loved ones, right? But I guess you know the answer... you wouldn't exchange your children or spouse for any of those? If it was in your power, you would do everything just to stay together with them - forever.

Now, think about God the Father. He created us, He created us to be in relationships with Him. He is our parent, who loves us more that He does His own life. When we realize it, when we reflect on how much we'd be able to do for our loved ones, it becomes quite obvious why would we be important in Creator's eyes, even if our planet is so small and we are just like dust on its surface.

It becomes obvious that He could have created these vast galaxies, these countless numbers of stars only to make us happy and touched by looking at their beauty. He knows that one day we may be able not just watch them, but actually explore them together with Him. One day...

We are important for Him, for He loves us. Not the size of our planet, not our size is important, you are important in God's eyes, for He loves you, personally you, He created you, He watched you forming and growing in mother's womb.

He guided all these processes, He daily provides for you, protects you and He has this ability to grant us eternal life together with Him. For He is God. Just think - wouldn't you do the same for your loved ones, having such ability?

This is one dimension of how John describes Jesus, the eternal Word of God. Breath taking dimension, which helps us to realize on limitedness, and incomprehensible greatness of our God. You are not a centre of Universe, as our culture often tries to teach, but, and this is much more important, you are in the very centre of your Creator's heart.

What is our response to it? How do we appreciate God's care for us? Do we actually realize how much to us is given daily, do we thank Him for all the countless blessings we keep receiving? How often we just presume that this is what we have achieved.

How much do we care about others, about other children of God? How much do we do for them? How often do we think mainly about us? How much do we allow the Father's love to change our lives, so that we share His love with others. It's sad, how much our sin can blind us.

Then in the following verses John adds another dimension. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. [...] No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

When we still have the picture of this infinite Universe before our eyes, and we realize that all of this was created and is still hold together by the Word of God, who has always been with God, and who has always been God, it is really mind stretching exercise to grasp that the same eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us. As one of our kind. As man.

Imagine, Creator of Universe taking home in Mary's womb. Eternity coming into time, infinite One taking on human body. How much you need to zoom-in in this picture to get from Creator of Universe to a man, to a tiny baby in mother's womb. It is quite a mental exercise.

And again, just think for a while, how much would you do for your dearest loved ones? If there was a situation where they were heading towards eternal destruction and you by your self-sacrificial actions you could turn things around and they would be able to enjoy eternity with you. How much would you do for them? Is there a limit?

Our God gives His answer, as apostle Paul describes it in his letter to Philippians: "He [the eternal Word] ... did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the

likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Phi 2:6-8)

We can read these words and we can understand what they mean, but I doubt that we’ll ever be able to comprehend fully their meaning. God the Creator of Universe, becoming man, dwelling among us, giving up His life, dying to save us, to save you, so that you can know His heart, His attitude towards you, so that He could give you eternal life, to restore you into the life for which you were created.

This message about God’s sacrificial love towards us should enable us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to serve them, but ... it is folly for those who try to grasp everything by reason, and stumbling block for those who are looking for signs. That’s why so many of those to whom Jesus came rejected Him. That’s why so many reject Him today.

But just think about it. How do we know things in nature, - we observe them, we measure them, etc. But how do we know persons? By being in conversation with them, by talking with them. How could God reveal Himself to us so that we can know Him? Only through conversation, only by speaking with us.

How could He speak in a way that we can understand Him? Only if He was one of us, and that’s exactly what He did. The eternal Word came to us as one of us – to speak to us so that we can know Him.

It is so difficult for us to accept it. We need this divine Helper, we need the Holy Spirit to kindle trust in our hearts, so that we could accept this ultimate revelation of God - that this is how much He loves you.

But when the Holy Spirit enlightens us with the Gospel, then we can say about this man Jesus Christ together with the apostle Thomas: “My Lord and my God.”

If you meant what you said today in the Creed “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, my Lord” ... then you, as the apostle John wrote, have believed in his name, and Jesus Christ has given you the right to become a child of God. Rejoice, for there are no better news than these. Rejoice and live as a child of God. Amen.