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'And the Word Was Made Flesh'

My dear People:

In the Offertory of every Mass the priest recalls the wondrous mystery of Christmas and prays that all God's people will come to the full realization of the good news that burst upon our world when "The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us."

As a few drops of water symbolic of our personal helplessness are mingled with the wine which is the sign of divinity, we pray:

"By this mingling of water and wine may we share in the divinity of Christ Who humbled Himself to share in our humanity."

The prayer reminds us that Christmas is a fact almost 2,000 years old which happened in the words of the Gospel at a precise moment in history "when the fullness of time had come"—i.e., when humanity had so realized its own inadequacy and helplessness that it was crying for redemption. It was then that God the Father placed the living Heart of His only-begotten Son in the body of a dying humanity to give it new life. He took our human life—the life of all humanity—and gave us His divine life.

The prayer reminds us, too, that Christmas is of **this moment for each of us who admits his helplessness**, his need for redemption from his sinful ways. This feast should see something born in us who hunger and thirst for joy and hope and tenderness. Every one of us has his own fullness of time and that is exactly when divinity lays hold of our humanity.

Each of us must decide whether or not to accept faithfully the Christmas message. But it is only by its acceptance that we can achieve the full stature of our humanity which has been united to the fullness of God. The seemingly bold assertion of the Fathers of the Church: "God became Man that man might become God" is the truth the Church announces again this Christmas.

To keep Christmas is to experience in our own person the dimensions of the mystery of God's personal love for each of us—that He humbled Himself and clothed His omnipotence in the frail fabric of our flesh.

May this Christmas bring all of you to that "fullness of time" when we allow God to embrace us and fill our hearts with the joy and the hope of the Incarnation.

This is my prayer for each of you.

Joseph L. Hogan

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