

2016  
Fr. Robert D. Arnold

*Christmas Day*  
*St. John 1:1-14*

✠ In the name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

On this day, some 1600 years ago, St. Gregory of Nazianzus preached a sermon. He called this day, the Nativity of our Lord, “a strange conjunction.” To him it was a day without precedent; a day in which God suspended the laws of Nature; a day where opposites have been joined.

For “...He who is without flesh becomes incarnate; the Word puts on a body; the Invisible is seen; He whom no hand can touch is handled; the Timeless has a beginning; the Son of God becomes Son of Man – Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.... O strange conjunction! The Self-existent comes into being; the Uncreated is created.”

Today is the festival of the Incarnation: God from God, “Light from light, the Word of the Father comes to His own image, in the human race.”

Why did He do it? Why did the Father bring this thing to pass? St. Gregory believed it was to populate heaven: Christ descends to earth that we might be raised on high—again, that strange conjunction. Martin Luther believed that Christ came to establish a shrine within our hearts—“a bed, soft, undefiled, a holy shrine, within my heart, That you and I need never part.”

Either way you want to look at it, it is marvelous in our sight. “For the sake of flesh He takes flesh; for the sake of soul He is united to a rational soul, purifying like by like. In every way He becomes human, except for sin. He shares in the poverty of [our] flesh, that [we] may share in the riches of His Godhead.”

Christ is born: glorify Him.

Christ comes from heaven: go out to meet Him.

Christ descends to earth: let us be raised on high.

Let all the world sing to the Lord; let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad, for His sake who was first in heaven and then on earth.

Christ is here in the flesh: let us exult with fear and joy—with fear, because of our sins; with joy, because of the hope that He brings us. *Amen.*