

Sunday Homily

2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

3 JANUARY 2021

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II

“We saw his glory, the glory that is his
as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Illustration

When something new is invented, we have an innate tendency to say, “It will never catch on!” People have said it about railways, the combustion engine, powered flight, television... the list is endless. Later, looking back, we find it hard to think of a world in which these inventions did not exist.

Human inventions have taken over from nature in providing us with the background to our lives. Even if we live away from town or city life, there is no escaping the hum of traffic, the vapour trails in the sky or the insidious presence of chemicals in our air, water and food.

Possibly one of our greatest inventions is our capacity to record all that happens around us. We began as human beings with the great gift of memory, and for a long time we relied on spoken traditions and copied practices to pass on our culture and beliefs. Then came the written word and pictures, codifying our lives but also continuing the work of imagination in art, poetry and song. Later came the world of radio, telephone and television. Now, with the microchip’s extraordinary abilities, we can record everything and communicate everything. The question is whether this creative blitz, with all the power of modern technology, overwhelms our human receivers – our ears, eyes and feelings. How do we discern what is true and what is good in all this glittering world?

Gospel Teaching

The whole of John’s Gospel is the evangelist’s attempt to answer this question of discernment. Jesus is portrayed as the healer and teacher who embodies in himself the truth for which we search. As he says to Thomas at one point: “I am the way, the truth and the life.” In the Prologue to his Gospel John summarises the historical sweep of this act of revelation. The Word was always in the world. It was there before the world began, intimately involved with its creation. It was there in creation itself, but people failed to recognise it, even though it was the life and light by which they existed.

John the Baptist came to announce that the Word was coming into the world in a new way. The Word became flesh. He became a human being, not through purely human action but by the power of God. He did this so that we in our turn