

Christmas Day C, 2012

Text: John 1:1-18

Title: Creativity

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Creativity is a beautiful thing. It's a miraculous thing.

Think of a painter, who can see a vision, a picture in his head, and put that vision on paper using just a few paints and tiny brush, and creating a canvas with a gorgeous landscape or a poignant scene with people interacting, using that one picture to tell a story.

Think of a poet who uses but a few words to create poem that perfectly captures an emotion or an idea, and uses that poem to cause you to think, to question and rethink your whole concept and view of the world.

Think of a composer, who paints pictures with sounds and music, using the vibrations of the air pull at your heart causing your spirit to soar, giving your goosebumps when the chords change and shift from one key to the next.

Artistic creativity is a glorious gift of God, whether it's the visual arts- painting, drawing, sculpting, even theatre and cinema- the literary arts- poetry, and novels, and the musical arts- hymns and songs, operas and symphonies. In all these ways God allows us to take what is inside of us and made it known to the senses- through the eyes and ears and into the hearts of other people.

This is especially true in the church, as the faith and witness of the saints who have gone before us live on in our music, in our readings, in our prayers, in our liturgy.

The greatest gift of creativity, the most beautiful and miraculous expression of creativity is in the conception and birth of child.

God gives us the ability to create life itself. A living, breathing, human being. Not just a canvas or a clay pot, a poem or a song, but another person. As a husband and wife express their love to one another, it's not just for themselves, it's not for their own pleasure, but to create something new together. And that child, that new life, is an expression of both mother and father.

This is how God expresses Himself to us, too, through the birth of a child. Yes, we can see and know things about God through the beauty of creation. Yes, God spoke to our Fathers by the prophets long ago. But now God speaks to us, God expresses Himself to us now, today, through His Son.

Jesus was not conceived and born in the usual way. Jesus was not just the son of Mary and Joseph. He had been around much longer than either of them. He was in the beginning with

God, in fact He was God. Through Him all things were made, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Jesus, the Word, is God's way of expressing Himself, the invisible qualities of God that we cannot see, and making them real. Just as an artist takes an idea and makes it known through words or pictures or sounds, so Jesus Christ, in His very being shows you who God is.

In Jesus was life. True life. Real life. Life the way that God meant it to be. Jesus wasn't just alive, but there was life in Him. Life flows from Him. The words and the touch of Jesus heal and bless, restore life and bring back from the dead. Jesus' life overflowed abundantly from Him into the lives of the people He touched.

That life beamed from Jesus like a beacon shining in the darkness. The same word that spoke, "Let there be light" in the beginning, before time even existed, brought light back to a world darkened by sin. Darkened by hate. Darkened by death.

Nothing can extinguish this light. Nothing darken it, not even death itself.

The world loves darkness. The world loves to hide from God and embrace the dark deeds of death. Jesus' own people did not receive Him. Jesus own family, His own disciples abandoned Him. You, too. You turned your back on the light and scurried back into the darkness.

But Jesus did not leave you in the darkness of death. He brought you here to the font, where His light still shines. With His word, He brought you back to life, and lit a candle inside of you to bear His light into the world.

You were born again, God's creation, God's expression of Himself. You were born not of blood nor of the will of flesh nor of the will of man but of God.

You are God's creation, and your life is now an expression of God Himself.

Every piece of art is unique, different, special, and so are you. God doesn't make copies, He makes each individual piece of art, each creation different, and that is the case for you, too. God's only got one of you, and you are his unique expression of love.

We cannot see God. No one has. But we see Him first and foremost through Jesus Christ, His Son, born this day. In Jesus we see the truth of God, the true nature of who God is and what He's really like. In Jesus we see the grace of God, His love even for those who brought darkness and death into His marvelous creation. In Jesus we see the glory of God, the brightness and beauty of heaven here in the flesh. If you want to see God, look at Jesus Christ.

And look also to your fellow Christians, God's other children, born again with His light and life also in them. Look to them as the light God has kindled inside of them comes out overflowing in creations of brilliant music, song, and literature, and in actions that bring life and light to the world around them.

And when you feel yourself getting a bit out of tune, when the rhythm and rhyme of your life doesn't seem to work, when things are becoming dull and out of focus, come back to hear the Word of God, to taste the Word made flesh, and to let the whole body of God's work bring you back to the beauty that God has created in you.

True artists are perfectionists, continuing to work and create and change their pieces throughout their lives.

And God is continuing to work and create in you, too. Like an painter continually scraping off a bit and reworking it, or a composer changing a few notes, or a poet tweaking a few words, so God is continuing to work and create in you until the last day when His masterpiece is unveiled, when we see all God's individual pieces of art assembled together, and it will be glorious.