

HOW ARE YOU CHRISTMASSING?

I have three real heroes. I keep preaching about them and thinking about them. And they're all key to the story of Christmas. The thing they all have in common is what they became, and continued to be, after encountering Christ. One is Joseph – Mary's fiancé. Imagine how her news hit him... and his family... Yet he found his call in sticking with his pregnant young bride-to-be and became – literally – the man who saved Jesus' life.

The next one's Luke. I'm a former newsman and broadcaster, and he's my communications hero. Nobody else researched and then told the story of Jesus from before his birth to after his resurrection – and the explosion of faith that was the early church – like Luke. Unique. Brilliant. The third one is John. The disciple who lived to a ripe old age, which gave him a “big picture” perspective of the place of Jesus in God's whole cosmic plan – and whose insights are so perfectly laid out in the Gospel that carries his name. He it is who talks of the Word Made Flesh... the Light of the World. For him, Creation is not an event of the past but the ongoing life of God with his people: “...and the Word became flesh and lived among us.” We are God's first sacrament. A tangible expression of an eternal reality.

It was my privilege to lead Communion on the first Sunday of Advent this year in the congregation where Lesley and I worship – Crown Church in Inverness – and just before the Sacrament, we sang “Make way, make way, for Christ the King.” Graham Kendrick's excellent Advent song picks up on the ancient Jewish Rabbinic tradition that each person has a procession of angels going before them and crying out, “Make way for the image of God.” Imagine how different our lives and world would be if we lived with this as our reality and the truth that guided our lives.

The implications are profound. It changes how we see ourselves and one another, the way we live, our actions, and our words. It means that Christmas cannot be limited to an event. Christmas is a life to be lived, a way of being. It means that Christmas is more properly understood as a verb rather than a noun. So maybe we should stop asking, “How's your Christmas?” Instead, it should be “How are you Christmassing?”

The Word became flesh and has never ceased living among us. The Word became flesh and will never cease living among us. So, make way. Wherever you go. Whatever you are doing. Whoever you are with. Make way for the image of God. Christmas your way through life – and so be light to the world.

Doug McRoberts