

In preparing for Christmas

I came across a couple stories

The first is about the language God speaks

It is the story is of an African boy by the name of Emmanuel

Emmanuel wondered what language God spoke

And if he would be able to understand if he heard God's voice

So he set off on a journey

He traveled to every corner of the world

He could not come up with a satisfactory answer

At last he came to the town of Bethlehem

He was tired and tried getting a room

But there was none available

Going outside to seek shelter

He came across a cave

But he found this too was occupied

A young couple with a new born child in the manger

Turning to leave

He was surprised to hear the mother call to him

Emmanuel, we've been waiting for you

He was amazed that she knew his name

And even more surprised to hear what came next

'For a long time you have been searching the world over

To find out what language God speaks

Now, your journey is over

Tonight you can see with your own eyes the language God speaks

He speaks the language of love

Expressed in sharing, understanding, mercy and total acceptance

God speaks to our hearts in ways that are deeper than words

This is expressed in the 2nd story

A Christmas parable by Louis Cassels

You may have heard this or a version of it

There was a man who thought Christmas was a bunch of humbug

He wasn't a scrooge

But a kind and decent man

Generous and took good care of his family

He just didn't get Christmas

The whole business of the Incarnation

He just couldn't understand

His wife was a faithful churchgoer

As she was getting the children ready

He told her

I am sorry to distress you

But I simply cannot understand the claim God became man

It makes no sense to me

So the wife and kids went off to Midnight Mass

Declining to go with them

He promised to wait up for them

After they left, it began to snow

He thought that if they had to have Christmas

Might as well be a white Christmas

Settling into his chair by the fireplace

He was startled to hear thumping at the window

Thinking neighbor kids were throwing snowballs

He went to the door

He found a flock of birds caught by the storm

They must have been trying to seek shelter

And tried flying through his window

He did not know what to do

But he had to do something

He couldn't let them lie there and freeze

Is children had a pony kept in a warm barn

If he could get them there they would be safe

So he went and opened the barn door

Turned on the lights

The birds wouldn't budge

He tried leading them with bread crumbs

They remained flopping helplessly in the snow

He tried shooining them in

They scattered everywhere except into the warm barn

Then he thought

These birds see me as a giant, strange, terrifying creature

If I could only speak to them

If I could become one of them just for a short time

I could lead them into the barn

To safety

Right then, distant church bells began to ring

And it hit him

Sinking to his knees, he said

Now, I do understand

Now I see why you had to become man

In the Mass for Christmas Day we read St John's Gospel

In the beginning was the Word

The Word was with God

And the Word was God

This is the language of God

Yes, He will sometimes speak in words we understand

But He always speaks in ways that are deeper than words

If our hearts are open to His Word

Today He speaks to us in a deeper way

He speaks in the way of love

He speaks as an infant

From a stable, lying in a manger

We are so often distracted

We want to hear God in our language

And we can be deaf to His Word in our hearts

We can be like those birds

Afraid of a God we see as an Other

We can be frozen in fear of God as a judge

So He comes to us tonight

As a God of love and mercy

God has spoken

The Word has become flesh

Let us take a moment and allow this word to sink into our hearts

As we conclude with a prayer before the crib

May your presence, Prince of peace

Bless the world with peace

The poor with care and prosperity

The despairing with hope and confidence

The grieving with comfort and gladness

The oppressed with freedom and deliverance

The suffering with solace and relief

Loving Jesus, you are the only real joy of every human heart

Enlighten the eyes of my mind

So I can see the hope your presence brings

Jesus, I place my trust in you

Merry Christmas