

“Have the Same Mindset As Christ Jesus”

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Philippians 2.5-11
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Westby & Viroqua UMC

The first day of the year is designated, recognized, and celebrated by the Church as the Solemnity of the Name of Jesus. It is interesting that in many Latin cultures the name of Jesus is used not only as a proper name for many men when they are baptized (name given to men and occasionally together with or with the name of Mary or Joseph), but also in other ways that have nothing to do with religion, such as responding with "Jesus" when someone sneezes.

Americans are a bit more conservative in that sense and would never think of naming one of their children Jesus or using his name in any other way that didn't have a religious meaning.

Not so much for Latinos, and it is because many have been raised in religious environments where Jesus is considered more of a friend and companion than anything else. That relationship that many have with Jesus is one of friendship and personal intimacy that is shown in popular piety. What attracts some to the "Divine Child", the one who suffered for us, the one who agonized on the cross, the one who is received as if dead by the arms of his dear mother, the buried one, and the one who shares dinners with his friends after his death. resurrection, is evidence that Jesus is more than just God; he is also a man, a human being with whom one can identify because some have gone through experiences similar to those of Jesus. But they also consider him as God because it is him, and not the heavenly Father that many turn to when they need him and recognize him not only as a friend, but also as Savior and Redeemer.

The first month of the calendar, the month of January (in English January) receives the name of the pagan god Janus, represented by two faces facing in opposite directions. The ancient Romans considered him as the god of the beginning and the end, the god of entrances and exits, the god of war and peace, the god of the past and the future; opposite but related things. And for this reason the Church solemnly celebrates this first day of the year, remembering Jesus who was both God and man, who was born and died, and is identified in the Gospels as the door and the way, but also as the end of our pilgrimage. . He is, according to the author of the book of Revelation: "The alpha and the omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 1:7-9 and 22:13).

At the beginning of the year, this celebration invites each one of us to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ from the first day to the last of the year, and that we do so recognizing that we are also daughters and sons of God and that in each one of us finds both the human and the divine. Just as Christ was the image and reflection of the Father, we too are images of God, icons that reflect a little of what God is. Please listen once again to the words of today's second reading, taken from the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians: "Therefore be

in you this attitude that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God did not consider being equal to God as something to cling to, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, making himself similar to men. And finding himself in the form of a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, and death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name that is above all names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

In the words of the author Tomás de Kempis, we must imitate Christ in order to be his reflections for others who seek him and desire a relationship with him. Our way of thinking and acting should be like that of our older brother Jesus Christ. Not thinking that we are better than others because we are from such a country or we have a lot of money in the bank or we are professionals or we dress elegantly. Jesus, who was God, was born in a humble manger and ended his life in a tomb given by one of his disciples. As God, Jesus could have used that nature and power to avoid having to go through what the rest of us humans go through, but he chose to do it all so that we would have an example of someone who not only preached but also practiced what he preached. . And it is not only Saint Paul who believes in this way. Jesus himself said it: "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

The beginning of the year is the time when many look back, examine what they have done (both good and bad), and commit to better things. What better way to start this year of 2014 than by imitating our Lord Jesus Christ!