

# THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

---

## Word Made Flesh

“It’s high time we stopped *talking* about it, and started to *do* something!” There’s a moment when something might, as we say, *come true*. We’re good at thinking things that never happen, living in a dream, flirting with the impossible, and so on. It’s one of the charming things about us, the capacity to dream, the world of imagining. But it can get out of place; and we can become lost in unreality. Because our thoughts are designed to bear fruit in deeds; yet they are beguiling and fascinating, and there is a limitlessness in them we can’t experience in deeds. When we “come down to earth” and “deal with the real world”, we find that free flight of the mind depressingly bashing against the cliff wall of facts: things, and time, and place, and other people’s indifference, all that limits us and draws boundaries we have to keep.

### The Word Of God

With God it is different. When he forms a concept, *it comes true then and there*. This is what the Scripture means when it says: *God spoke, and it was so*: “Let there be light,” and there was light. When we imagine such a reality in human terms, it becomes appalling; because our minds are mercurial, fanciful, and venal: we skid from one reality to another, and our imaginings are immensely mobile: now sensible, decent, and worthwhile, now monstrous, now impossible, now visionary, now disastrously ugly. If everything *we* thought of sprang into being, the world would be in a sorry state! But the mind of God has about it a self-consistency that is incapable of lapsing from justice, and is perfect in its wisdom. It is this mind which guides creation on its metalled ways. When the creative power of God is exerted, we can say that “the Word is spoken”, and the product of his Word is brought into being.

### He Dwelt Amongst Us

The indwelling of the Word in human flesh does something immensely powerful to our nature. We know that every individual born on the face of the earth is unique, and modifies, by this uniqueness, the meaning of the word “human”. Did we ever *really* know what Art was before Michelangelo, or what Humour was until Chaplin, or what Music was before Beethoven? The humanity of these great people was a huge modification of what we understand “human” to mean. An irreplaceable, if quieter contribution, was made by their parents (yes, even Beethoven had to have a mother and father!) Now, the greatest “leap forward” in humanity was the moment when God himself entered in to our nature, and that happened at the

moment of the conception of Jesus. Someone once said that the least action of Jesus of Nazareth was enough to save the world - even the drawing of his first breath - because in him God’s salvation finally came home in the heart of humanity: he binds our nature to the nature of God for ever, and while God exists we can never any longer be lost.

### Revaluation Time

So this time of the year is a time to reconsider the value of our lives, the time particularly to revalue the body. In the heart of the winter, having reached a certain age, one can look at the poor old frame that has been through so much, and wonder how much longer it will agree to be schlepped through the shower, shaved, dressed, and shoved onto the rails again, morning after morning, expected to perform all its multitudinous functions - most of which we are happy to leave behind a veil of unknowing until they offer to break down. So often we disparage, mistreat, and take for granted the miracle-gift of our body. When we remember the Christmas mystery, however, we should feel a completely personal resurgence of tenderness towards human life, the tenderness shown by the Creator, and shared by us in rare, holy moments of great love and generosity. Those moments are the ones which bear fruit in goodness, in deep tolerance, sympathy and healing. Christmas reminds us that our love for one another does not have to fund itself from our own little store of feelings. It is a gift from the inexhaustible and (since the first Christmas) *indwelling* compassion of God. *Fr Philip*