

The third movement of the kerygma

In this column, I have been reflecting on the kerygma, the essential Gospel message of salvation, love, and mercy which is the heart of our faith.

To be effective evangelizers, each of us baptized into Christ needs to effectively communicate what our Christian faith means, how we have experienced the Lord, and why everyone is invited to the abundance of Jesus' life and grace, freely offered to all.

The 'whole Christ event'

The third movement of the kerygma is the whole Christ event, as God's gracious response to our existential predicament of condemnation to the power of sin and death.

Compassion is love's response to misery and suffering, and so the Father could not bear to leave us lost in the darkness of eternal estrangement from Him.

He sends us His Son, born of the Virgin Mary, human like us in every way but sin, and yet the fullness of God.

This astonishing truth, that the universal, mysterious, omnipotent, transcendent God humbles Himself to become one of His own creatures, is the pivot upon which all of human history stands and the very center of our Christian faith.

We have never gotten over the wonder of Christmas!

The following scenario may be an over-humanization of God, but it helps me understand the urgency and passion of the Lord's love for us.

Before the Word became flesh, I picture the Father, Son and, Holy

BISHOP'S CALENDAR

Bishop Donald J. Hying

Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020

7 a.m.

Live Relevant Radio interview, 1240 AM and 97.3 FM in the Madison area

Friday, Dec. 18, 2020

Mass with Cistercian Sisters, Valley of Our Lady Monastery, Prairie du Sac

Monday, Dec. 2, 2020

12 noon

Celebrate Mass, Holy Name Oratory, Holy Name Heights, Madison

Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020

Staff catechesis, Holy Name Heights

Thursday, Dec. 24, 2020

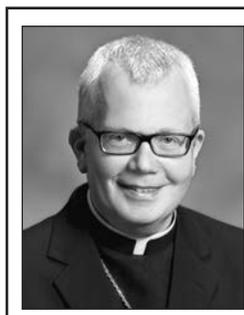
6 p.m.

Celebrate Christmas Eve Mass, St. Bernard Parish, Middleton

Friday, Dec. 25, 2020

12 midnight

Celebrate Christmas Eve Midnight Mass, St. Patrick Church, Madison



From the Bishop's Desk

† Bishop
Donald J.
Hying

Spirit looking down upon the world and musing over the human situation.

The Father says, "They are so lost and broken! There is so much sin and hopelessness, violence, and fear among our children!"

The Holy Spirit chimes in, "They don't even know who they are or that we love them. Sin and death have such a terrible grip on everybody."

The Father responds, "One of us needs to go down there, teach them, love them, and bring them home to us."

And I imagine the Son raising His hand and quietly offering, "Father, I will go."

The whole Christ event is that cosmic rescue mission! God created everything good and beautiful, we messed it up through sin and selfishness, and the Lord gives us a way through the shadow of death by coming in our flesh to heal and conquer the power of sin and death within us.

These evil forces do not vanish — we still live with the terrible consequences of both our own sins and those of others, and we will all die — but in Jesus Christ, God offers us the grace and mercy to transcend evil and receive both forgiveness and eternal life.

This extraordinary offer of salvation should overwhelm, shock, transform, and tantalize us!

I deserve punishment for my selfishness and sin, yet the Lord offers me pardon.

I am locked into the ancient curse of death, yet Jesus promises me eternal life.

A 'love story'

The whole Bible is a love story, the narrative of God creating, teaching, healing, and saving us in Christ.

The New Testament especially tells the ageless tale of this great reconciling work, whereby God Himself appears on earth as the mighty Lord, yet hidden in human flesh, to defeat the reign of Satan and to reconcile us with the Father, each other, and with our own deepest selves.

This fundamental healing work Jesus accomplishes in three ways: The Incarnation, His public ministry and His Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

Simply by taking on human flesh as God, Jesus already begins to heal the chasm, the rift, the divide between the Lord and us.

Only in Christ, do we see the perfect unity of God and humanity. In His own Divine Person with two natures, Jesus raises us to a greater dignity than we had before the Fall!

As the Easter Exultet joyfully proclaims, "Oh happy fault (of Adam) that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!"

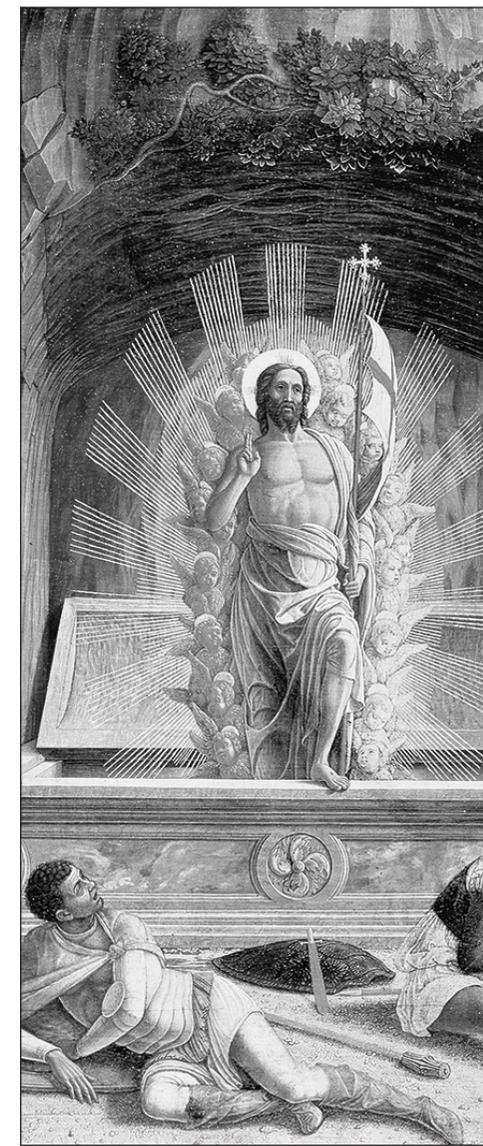
God born as a baby! None of the prophets would have dared imagine it.

Everything that Jesus says and does in His public ministry reconciles the people to God.

His preaching, healings, miracles, forgiveness all shine with a divine radiance reaching out to the lost, broken, and marginalized, as the Lord seeks to heal, bless and reconcile all of humanity to the Father.

The parables, nights in prayer, feasts and fasts, exhausting days, the press of the crowd, the travel to towns and villages, the storm at sea, and the resistance of the Pharisees all form the beautiful mosaic of Jesus' pressing desire to save every single human person, made in the image and likeness of God.

We never tire of hearing, reading, and meditating on the beautiful Gospel stories of Jesus' words and actions, for there we encounter the full-



The Resurrection is depicted in a 15th-century painting by Italian painter Andrea Mantegna. (CNS photo/Bridgeman Images)

ness of God's Heart turned inside out. Jesus' mission reaches its dramatic fulfillment in the death and Resurrection.

The Son of God embraces the totality of our sin, alienation, and death, as He surrenders to the terrifying mystery of the Passion.

The Crucifixion and death of Christ who was lifted high on the most horrific instrument of torture and destruction forever stands at the heart of human history as the total expression of God's passionate love for us and the promise of salvation.

Without ever having sinned Himself, Christ suffers the deadly consequences of our sins, wraps Himself in them, lifts them up to the Father, and in the shocking and glorious triumph of the Resurrection on Easter, conquers sin and death forever.

This cosmic struggle between Christ and Satan, grace and sin, life and death is the very substance of the Gospel; God's victory is the saving message of the kerygma, which drives us to share the fruits of this divine triumph with every person we know.

APPOINTMENT

Msgr. James Bartylla, Vicar General, announces the following priest appointment made by Most Reverend Donald J. Hying, Bishop of Madison:

- **Rev. Fr. Kumud Nayak, CJD**, to parochial vicar, Saint Olaf Parish, DeForest, and Saint Joseph Parish, East Bristol, per canon 545, effective upon ordination to the presbyterate on Monday, December 7, 2020, the Memorial of St. Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church.

Msgr. James Bartylla

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Vicar General

