

## DECEMBER 31, 2025 FATHER HENK VAN MEIJEL

Our Gospel reading on this last day of the year, it really plunges us right into the mystery of our faith. And John, it's the high theology. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."

We never can describe God. It's impossible. And it's God is mystery. God is outside of space and time. And if you can understand that, then you must be much smarter than everyone else.

A few years ago, I had a person coming to me, and he even drew me a diagram. And it was a very beautiful drawing, and to explain to me how God worked. The only problem was he had schizophrenia, due to using a lot of illicit drugs. So, but he's the only one who tried to explain it to me. Because God is not explainable.

And yet, God is at work in each one of us. And God works in the heart. And it's we never can explain how that is possible. But God is among us, in ways in which we don't understand. And a God who moves us forward, from day to day. As long as we're open, and we're open to God's guidance, just in the silence of our hearts.

Never can explain it, we can write, we can do a PhD on it, at university, and it's like a bottomless pit. We never will explain it. And I was going to say, "And it is as simple as that." But it is simple.

Just like when Moses asked, at the burning bush, "Who are you?" And God said, "I am who I am. I am." And that's the best we can do. And in the meantime, of course, we have all kinds of different names for God in scripture. God has given us that great deposit, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

And of course, right now we're still in the Octave of Christmas, and we celebrate the greatest miracle of all time: the birth of Jesus. Who was that sign. God let himself be known in the flesh.

In first letter of John, it is writing about end times. And the Early Christians, they recall thought that the end times were here. That in their lifetime the world would come to an end. And so they write about those who have gone away from us, who do not belong to us, who are preaching different things.

And it was a very confusing time, especially in the beginning, as they tried to make also sense of this revelation of Jesus. The revelation of Jesus Christ. And this trying to explain went on for hundreds of years. And we still continue to work with it, each in our own way.

I so often have people coming to me, during spiritual direction, and they say, "I want to understand God." Well, good luck. I cannot help you with understanding God. But we each want to be closer to God. God is that force that draws us in. And when we really had had that taste of God, we just want more and more of it. And but it does not mean that God is going to give us that deep feeling of God's presence, because cannot be addictive.

Today we celebrate Pope Sylvester I. Pope Sylvester, who also was deeply touched by that Spirit of God. And he was actually Pope for 21 years. He became Pope at age 30 - Very young age. And he was elected in 314. One year after our faith became legal in the Roman Empire.

In February 313, we had the Edict of Milan, when our faith became legal, and we could, the Christians could celebrate the faith the way they wanted. But also a time with trying to come to terms with when the faith was underground. When things had to be done illegally.

And Pope Sylvester is very much known for fighting, or settling the Donatist Heresy. And the Donatist Heresy was much about that they claimed that priests had to be faultless. A priest had to be pure. Which is impossible.

I might have the beautiful chasuble on, but I'm not faultless. I have many. I just have to look over my life, and I have done many things which are not good. Yet, I'm called to this priesthood.

And so, out of that came that... A priest... That the sacraments are valid. That even though I am not perfect, and I never will be perfect, I'm not God, that the sacraments that I celebrate, the Eucharist, that it is valid. And that it's really food of Christ for all of us.

And so, Pope Sylvester really was at the forefront of theology and setting things straight. And one of the things he's also responsible for, to a great deal, is that the Nicene Creed - which is a statement of faith, and touches on that mystery of God. The mystery of God which we cannot understand.

Amen.