

J.D. Ousley
Homily—9Dec18
Lessons and Carols
“Outreach”

In the Name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Amen.

“I’ve heard that she is going through a tough time. I need to *reach out* to her.”

Most of us have said that at one time or another. A friend of yours breaks up with her boyfriend, and you know that she is feeling sad. You plan to give her a call to ask her to go out to dinner with you.

When you do that, you are being a friend. You are expressing the human love that you share—you’re reaching out to a friend.

At the same time, when you do that, you are expressing the love Jesus showed when he was on earth. Christ’s love is perfectly expressed in the words of a carol that we sing every year at the beginning of this service:

“Jesus is our childhood’s pattern;
day by day, like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.”

This is why Jesus came to earth. As the nine lessons remind us, we need a Savior. Human beings inevitably sin—like Adam and Eve. Without divine help, we remain mired in bad choices—things done and things not done.

But we aren’t left on our own. The divine love *reaches out* to us in our fallen world. As the Ninth Lesson reminds us, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

So God’s plan is realized on earth. We feel for others, and they feel for us, and we all share in God’s love.

So our faith touches the whole person—the heart as well as the head—our feelings as well as our thoughts.

In this service, we find that the lessons touch *our minds*, as we hear the wisdom of the Prophets and the beginning of the story of Jesus Christ, the Word of God. The divine Spirit helps us to have, as St. Anselm said, “faith seeking understanding.”

At the same time, the Christmas music touches *our hearts*. Music offers us pure joy. It binds up our wounds and brings us release from the problems of the world that we can’t solve. Music is a gift to us from Christ who feels our sadness and shares our gladness.

Amen.