Quite a few years ago now, I was invited to a young couple’s house for dinner. Two years before, I had officiated at their wedding and now they were the proud parents of a baby son. As much as they said they wanted me over to dinner, I think they really just wanted to show off their new child! When I got to their house, I looked at them both as we were greeting one another. They were both in their twenties and I told them they looked radiant, but the truth was that they each had big dark bags under their eyes and looked as if they hadn’t slept in weeks.

Then I heard before I saw the reason. Crying, crying, crying. They went in to pick up their infant son. He cried. His mother nursed him. He burped and cried. His Dad picked him up and gently bounced him. He cried. They put him down in the crib so we could sit down to our meal. He cried.

After dinner, we were lounging around the living room watching some game on TV … or, at least, I was watching the game, they were nodding off and snoring gently. This really didn’t bother me all that much since I get pretty much the same reaction whenever I talk in church! But then, the sound … like a siren … like an alarm … went off and everybody was once again wide awake! Crying, crying, crying … their baby was howling to beat the band. Slowly, resignedly, his Mommy got up from her chair and went to pick up her very unhappy little child. As she held him, she explained that he had been colicky for the last coupla weeks and she really hoped he’d grow out of it soon or he’d age his parents
twenty years before his first birthday. I asked her if I could hold the baby for a bit and see if I could get him to settle down. Both Mom and Dad said, “Be our guest!” I took the little one, laid my head on the arm of the couch, put him on my chest with his little head near my heart. And whaddya know, the howls stopped, the eyes drooped and closed, and we had one sleeping baby on the chest of the one who would baptize him. I thought his parents were gonna light a candle right then, call the Vatican and claim a miracle. They offered me their just-now-posted “Au Pere’s” job for as long as I wanted it! We all slept the sleep of the innocent till I had to go home and returned their son to their arms, still sleeping, still silent.

Why do we honor Jesus as a Baby?

Almost from the very beginning of our time on this planet, we human beings have been colicky and complaining, whining and crying, sick and broken. We ate the forbidden fruit. We killed our brothers. We built the towers to honor ourselves. We hated. We suffered. We got lost. We gave up. And the world was filled with so many tears, so much crying. We forgot God.

But God didn't forget us. One night, two thousand years ago in a lowly stable in Bethlehem, God became the littlest one of us so we wouldn't be afraid when He picked us up and laid us on His chest listening to the Divine heart beating with love for me. Sssh ... don't cry now ... don't cry ... sleep ... sleep in heavenly peace.