

THE INCARNATION



The Incarnation of Jesus Christ is one of the central mysteries of our faith. We believe that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the eternal Son of God, took on our human nature and physical form in order to elevate our dignity and open the way to the Kingdom of God for us.

What it means that Jesus became human was a source of great debate for the early Christians. Some taught that Jesus was merely a man who had been adopted as God's son; others taught that his

human form was an illusion and that Jesus was pure spirit; others that he was the first creation of God and not 'consubstantial' with the

heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

In other words, Jesus is 100% God, just like God the Father, and is also 100% human, just like us.

How was this accomplished? St. Paul uses the Greek word *kenosis* when he says that "[Jesus]

“AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH
AND MADE HIS DWELLING AMONG
US, AND WE SAW HIS GLORY.”

:: John 1:14

Father. The bishops at the Councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD) condemned these views and gave us the definitive doctrine on Jesus' nature which we still recite every Sunday: Jesus is "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father... he came down from

emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness" (emphasis added). In other words, Jesus freely subjected himself to our human frailty, even to death, setting aside the rights and glory due to him as God. He did this out of love for us and so that we might gain so great a savior through his Passion and Resurrection.



Watch the video:

youtu.be/n18olaynois

Family Discussion Questions

1. How can your family center their celebration of Christmas on Jesus' incarnation, rather than the consumerism encouraged by the wider culture?
2. Do you have a favorite depiction of Jesus, such as a painting or icon? What does it tell you about Jesus' nature? How does it depict his humanity and divinity?
3. What does it mean that Jesus humbled himself to take on our humanity? How can we imitate that humility?

Family Challenge

If you haven't yet, get out your family's Nativity set. Take time to reflect on the Nativity as a family: where did your Nativity come from? What is special or unique about its depiction of Jesus' birth? How does it remind you of the love Jesus showed by coming to us as one of us?

Additional Videos

- Four Reasons for the Incarnation youtu.be/VjDHmY7KevE
- How Could Jesus be Fully God and Fully Human? youtu.be/EtoevOdB7m0

Other Resources

- [*Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*](#) by Benedict XVI (Image, 2012)
- [*Joy to the World: How Christ's Coming Changed Everything \(And Still Does\)*](#) by Scott Hahn (Image, 2014)

At Christmas the Church remembers the great gift of the Incarnation and gives thanks that God loved us so much that he sent his Son to live among us, partake in our joys and sufferings, and offer his life on the Cross. Through him, what it means to be human has been forever changed. We can honor this gift by avoiding temptation and the occasions of sin, asking for healing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and encouraging one another to greater faithfulness and charity.



“BELIEF IN THE TRUE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD IS THE DISTINCTIVE SIGN OF CHRISTIAN FAITH: ‘BY THIS YOU KNOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD: EVERY SPIRIT WHICH CONFESSES THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD.’”

:: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 463



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