

What about Incarnation?

We are familiar with the Spanish word, “carne,” as in chili con carne. Carne simply means meat or flesh. Incarnation literally means the taking on of flesh. Pagans speak of reincarnation. We reject that idea, but you get the meaning.

We speak of Jesus, who is eternal God, a spiritual being, taking on a human body, human flesh, and becoming a physical being. We speak of this as the Incarnation of God the Son.

This incarnation is a service of love. Otherwise why would an infinitely glorious God who is completely fulfilled in the Holy Trinity want to do such a seemingly dumb thing? Was He just bored in heaven and wanted a little adventure? That’s impossible; of course not. He did it out of love for the crown of His creation. He did it for us. He did it to rescue us from total and everlasting failure.

Incarnation is the first step to the cross and resurrection. All mankind was helplessly sinking in the quicksand of sin. Sin was swallowing up the crown of God’s creation; the creature He so much loved. Once sin got started it was like a contagious hereditary disease. The only cure is to undo it with penance.

Remember, even the smallest sin makes man totally incompatible with perfect God and with the eternal future He created us for. Sin is an infinite offense that entered our world by one man, Adam.

Since sin is an infinite offense against our all perfect God, it would take infinite penance to make up for it. Infinite penance is everlasting hell for us since we are not infinite beings. Only infinite God could make up for it, but the sinning was started by a man, Adam, and a man had to do the cleansing penance.

The only possibility of salvation was penance by someone who was 100% infinite God and at the same time 100% a flesh and blood human descendant of the man, Adam. This requirement is fulfilled in the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus, born of Mary by the action of God the Holy Spirit makes possible the forgiveness of sins. Now we can have the hope of everlasting joy and fulfillment for all of us humans who choose God’s loving grace. Christ’s incarnation made possible the crucifixion and resurrection that made possible our salvation. Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter are one saving gift.

Now this explanation is perhaps, an oversimplification of the profound mystery of the incarnation. Hopefully, however, this can be a starting point for our meditation, awe and thankful wonder during this holy Christmas season. With thoughtful prayer we can have a deeper insight into God’s love for us.