



# LOURDES LEAFLET

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church  
2700 East Mechanic, Harrisonville, Mo 64701  
(816) 380-5744  
[www.ourladyoflourdesharrisonville.org](http://www.ourladyoflourdesharrisonville.org)

December 25, 2014  
Issue 82

## THE CHRISTMAS MYSTERY LIVES ON!

Today we once again experience the wonder and joy of Christmas!

*"...behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you, who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: 'Glory in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'" (Luke 2:10-14)*

With those first shepherds, we, too, have come "in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger." We have come to the stable. We enter and, with the eyes of faith, we see the Infant Savior and with Mary and Joseph looking on, we adore Him. He is so small, yet He is God's only-begotten Son. His tiny arms reach out in love to draw us closer to Him. How wonderful it is to be here. We do not wish to leave!

More precisely, we do not wish the reality that is Christmas to disappear: the Infant Jesus, lying in the manger, true God and true man, our Savior and Lord!

In fact, the reality that is Christmas does not disappear. Jesus Christ continues to renew His birth. How?

In one very real and unique way, Jesus is born again and is truly present every time the Holy Mass is offered. St. Edith Stein puts this so beautifully: "After 'the trees are lit and the presents exchanged' the bells toll for midnight Mass in which 'the miracle of the holy night is renewed on the flower-decked altars with their burning candles.'"

Of course, we would love to see with our human eyes the Infant Jesus lying in the manger. With the eyes of faith, we do see Him in every Mass, lying beneath the signs of bread and wine, truly and really present in our midst, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

In this Christmas Mass, Jesus our Savior and Lord reaches out to each of us. He does this in every Mass. In turn, we reach out to Him in welcome, and in Holy Communion, we invite Him to make His home within our hearts. Yes, in every Mass — in this Mass — the Lord Jesus renews the reality that is Christmas in our midst. This is why we participate in the Mass actively and consciously at least every Saturday night or Sunday throughout the entire year. How could we live without Him?

In another real way, Jesus Christ continues to renew His birth. How? By being born again within each of us. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us: "Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us" (§ 526). Every time we meet the Lord in prayer, every time we hear His living word and reflect on it, we are being formed in His image and His presence is being deepened within us. Of course, receiving the sacraments, especially penance and the holy Eucharist, increases His life-giving presence within us. In all these ways, Jesus Christ renews the reality that is Christmas within each of us. Every day — this day — let us welcome Him with joy!



Yes, Jesus Christ renews His birth today in our midst. As we welcome Him with hearts full of wonder and joy, we offer Him a gift: the gift of an open heart, willing to let Him be born in us. Because He once accepted the adoration of the shepherds and the gifts of the three wise men, He now accepts the gift of our hearts. He will make His dwelling within us and transform us, so that we will be His living presence wherever we go.

The reality that is Christmas continues as Jesus Christ renews His birth in us. This Christmas, and on each day that follows, let us renew this mystery of Christmas by praying often these simple yet profound words: "Live, Jesus, in our hearts forever!"

A blessed Christmas to each and every one of you! May Christ's peace, joy and love embrace you today and always!

## Some Paradoxes and Mysteries of the Incarnation

By Msgr. Charles Pope



In the ancient Church, and until rather recently, we genuflected at the two references to the incarnation in the Mass: at the Creed and at the Last Gospel (John 1). Why did we do this? It was explained to me that the mystery was so deep that one could only fall in silent reverence.

There are many paradoxes and seeming impossibilities in the incarnation. As mysteries they cannot be fully solved, so they claim our reverence. We genuflected in the past, and we bow today at the mention of the incarnation in the creed for it is a deep mystery.

As we celebrate Christmas I would like to list some of the paradoxes of Christmas. I want to say as little of them as possible, just enough to make the paradox clear. This paucity of words, not common with me, is in reverence to the mystery and also to invite your own reflection.

1. The Infinite One becomes an infant.
2. An antiphon for the Christmas season says, *How can we find words to praise your dignity O Virgin Mary, for he whom the very heavens cannot contain, you carried in your womb.*
3. An old Latin Carol (*in Dulci Jublio*) says, *Alpha et O, Matris in Gremio* – (Alpha and Omega, sitting in mommy’s lap).
4. He who looks down on all creation looks up to see his mother. The most high looks up from a cradle. Of this moment even the pagans wrote with longing and tenderness: *Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem...ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores, occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni occidet* (Begin, little boy to recognize the face of your mother with a smile....For you, your own cradle will bear delightful flowers; the serpent will die, and the plant that hides its venom) – Virgil 4th Eclogue.
5. He who indwells all creation is born in homelessness.
6. He to whom all things in heaven and on earth belong, is born in poverty and neediness.
7. He is the mighty Word through whom all things were made. He is the very utterance of God, the Voice which summons all creation into existence. Of this Word, this Utterance, this Voice, Scripture says, *The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful, the voice of the LORD is full of majesty...The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness ...The voice of the LORD makes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forests bare; and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”* (Ps. 29). Yet, this voice is now heard as the cooing and crying of an infant.
8. His infant hand squeezes his mother’s finger, as infants do. From that same hand, the universe tumbled into existence. That same hand is steering the stars in their courses.
9. He who holds all creation together in himself (Col 1:17) is now held by his mother.
10. He who is the Bread of Life is born in Bethlehem (House of Bread) and lies in a feeding trough (manger).
11. He who is our sustainer and our food, is now hungry and fed by his mother.
12. *Angels and Archangels may have gathered there, Cherubim and Seraphim thronged the air! But only his mother in her maiden bliss, could worship the beloved with a kiss.* (Christina Rossetti “Ere the Bleak Mid Winter”).

Each of these is meant to be a meditation on the great mystery of the Incarnation. Please add to this list!

**Remember the word paradox means something that defies intuition or the common way of thinking.** It unsettles or startles us to make us think more deeply. It comes from the Greek: *para-* + *dokein*. *Para* usually meaning “beside, off to the side,” sometimes “above,” and *dokein* meaning “to think or seem.” Hence a paradox is something off to the side of the usual way of seeing things or thinking about them. If you are going to relate to God you’re going to deal with a lot of paradox, for God’s ways and thinking often defy and confound human ways and thinking. God is not irrational but He often acts in ways that do not conform with worldly expectations.

This Christmas consider these paradoxes and learn from them. Remember too, mysteries are to be lived more than solved. Reverence is more proper to mystery than excessive curiosity. Here, more is learned in silence than by many words.