

# THE INCARNATION

In the Creed, we proclaim that Jesus Christ "was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man." Thus, the eternal Word of God **took on our human nature** and fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

## COMING TO TERMS

**IMMANUEL:** In Hebrew, "God with us," Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this Old Testament title.

**INCARNATION** literally means "the action of taking on the flesh." By "dissecting" this word, its meaning becomes clear:

**IN** = to take up; to be  
put into

**CARN** = flesh

**ATION** = the action of

- **JESUS CHRIST REVEALED THAT WHICH HAD ONLY BEEN PARTIALLY REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...**  
*Formerly He appeared to Moses and to the other prophets in the form of fire or as a bodiless being; but now, by a Virgin and by the will of the Father, He has become man... (Saint Justin the Martyr)*
- **...AS WELL AS THE EXTENT OF GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE.**  
*Who is able to explain the extent of God's love? In love the Master took hold of us. Jesus Christ, for the sake of the love which He had for us and by the will of God, gave His blood for us, His flesh for our flesh, and His life for our lives. (Saint Clement of Rome)*
- **BY LIKENING HIMSELF TO US...**  
*He became man and dwelt bodily in the flesh... In the body He experienced hunger, thirst, suffering, weariness, and the like... The flesh was His... He carries our infirmities and He Himself bears our sins, so that it might be revealed that He has become man for the sake of us, and that the body in which He bore our sins is His own body. (Saint Athanasius)*
- **...HE RENEWS THE IMAGE OF GOD IN US...**  
*Man abandoned God and fashioned images carved after the human form. Since an image of man was falsely worshipped as God, God became truly man so that the falsehood might be destroyed... The Lord took on our likeness so that He might give us an even greater grace, so that sinful mankind might become a partaker of God. (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)*
- **...AND LIKENS US TO HIMSELF.**  
*You will follow the only true and reliable Teacher, the Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, because of His great love, became what we are so that He might bring us to be what He Himself is. (Saint Irenaeus of Lyons)*
- **BY UNITING US TO HIMSELF...**  
*He became man, having been conceived according to the will of God the Father, for the sake of believing men and for the defeat of the demons. (Saint Justin the Martyr)*
- **...HE SERVES AS OUR MODEL.**  
*The word is the cause of our beginning and of our well-being, for He is God. And now this same Word has appeared as man. He alone is both God and Man... By Him we are taught to live well and to enter into life eternal. (Saint Clement of Alexandria)*

