



The Coming of Emmanuel

His divine life. "He appeared, and the soul felt its worth." That is the miracle which Christmas renews for us every year.

Each Sunday we confess that the Eternal Son of God is "*consubstantial* with the Father." As the *Catechism* explains, this unusual word means that "in the Father and with the Father, the Son is one and the same God."

We go on to confess that the Father's Beloved son "was *incarnate* of the Virgin Mary." From her He took flesh—our flesh, yours and mine. But the Incarnation, as the *Catechism* teaches, "does not mean that Jesus Christ is part god and part man." Rather, "He became truly man while remaining truly God." The Son of Mary is as truly and fully human as He is truly and fully God. In His divinity He is consubstantial with the Father; in His humanity He is consubstantial with us. Put "incarnate" and "consubstantial" together and you get the name for Jesus we associate with Christmas: "Emmanuel" —that is, "God with us."

He is Emmanuel because He *wants to be*. You and I had no choice in our flesh-taking; when God called us into being in the womb of our mother, He did not ask for our consent. In stark contrast, from all eternity the Father's only-begotten Son freely *chose* to be "with us" in the fullness of time. "He did not cling to equality with God," St. Paul tells us; instead, He "emptied Himself" to be born and dwell among us. The Son of Man made Himself consubstantial with us so that we might become fully human in Him and thereby share