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POPE: LOOK UPON INCARNATION WITH FAITH

Reflects on Birth of Christ, "Mystery of Love"

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 25, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The birth of Christ is a "mystery of love" that must be looked upon with faith, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope reflected today on the Incarnation in his annual Christmas message, which he delivered from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica. His words were heard by some 40,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square, as well as millions of television viewers worldwide who followed his Christmas greeting in 65 languages and the traditional blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city of Rome and the world).

"God became man," the Pontiff began. "He came to dwell among us. God is not distant: he is 'Emmanuel,' God-with-us. He is no stranger: he has a face, the face of Jesus."

He called the message of Christmas one that is "ever new, ever surprising, for it surpasses even our most daring hope."

But Christmas, the Holy Father continued, "is not merely a proclamation. It is an event, a happening, which credible witnesses saw, heard and touched in the person of Jesus of Nazareth!"

"Before this revelation we once more wonder," Benedict XVI then asked, "how can this be? The Word and the flesh are mutually opposed realities; how can the eternal and almighty Word become a frail and mortal man?"

"There is only one answer: Love," he affirmed. "Those who love desire to share with the beloved, they want to be one with the beloved, and sacred Scripture shows us the great love story of God for his people which culminated in Jesus Christ."

"The light of this truth is revealed to those who receive it in faith, for it is a mystery of love," the Pope stated. "Only those who are open to love are enveloped in the light of Christmas. So it was on that night in Bethlehem, and so it is today."

"The Incarnation of the Son of God is an event which occurred within history, while at the same time transcending history. In the night of the world a new light was kindled, one which lets itself be seen by the simple eyes of faith, by the meek and humble hearts of those who await the Savior. If the truth were a mere mathematical formula, in some sense it would impose itself by its own power. But if Truth is Love, it calls for

faith, for the 'yes' of our hearts."

The Pope said that the message of Christmas is also "a light for all peoples, for the collective journey of humanity."

"Emmanuel, God-with-us, has come as King of justice and peace," he said. "We know that his Kingdom is not of this world, and yet it is more important than all the kingdoms of this world. It is like the leaven of humanity: were it lacking, the energy to work for true development would flag: the impulse to work together for the common good, in the disinterested service of our neighbor, in the peaceful struggle for justice.

"Belief in the God who desired to share in our history constantly encourages us in our own commitment to that history, for all its contradictions. It is a source of hope for everyone whose dignity is offended and violated, since the one born in Bethlehem came to set every man and woman free from the source of all enslavement."