Why did God become human?

We know that “Jesus is the reason for the season.” It’s true, and, perhaps just as importantly, it rhymes. But how often do we think about what Jesus’ birth means for us? Today? Not 2,000 years ago, but right now?

What we really celebrate at Christmas is our Christian belief that God loves us so much that he came down from heaven and became one of us. Think about that for a second. God took on human form. That’s big all by itself. But then he came to live among us. God’s incarnation (becoming human) in the person of Jesus is the central mystery of our faith.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers several reasons that Jesus was born into our human family. Here are three lessons of his birth to carry with you throughout this Christmas season:

“The Word became flesh *so that thus we might know God’s love*” (No. 458, emphasis in original).

Jesus was born to teach us that God loves us no matter what. Jesus’ birth is the ultimate sign of God’s love for us. His crucifixion, death and resurrection are central to our faith, but without the Incarnation – without God choosing to take on human flesh – there would be no crucifixion, no resurrection, no salvation. In other words, without the babe in the manger, all the rest of God’s plan for us never happens.

Live It: Email a friend or family member who is going through a difficult time just as a reminder that you love them (and so does God).

“The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness” (No. 459).

Jesus was born to be a model of holiness in our daily lives. His birth in an animal stable teaches us about humility. His

teachings call us to care for the poor, the suffering and the marginalized. His life calls us to love others and to love God above all.

Live It: Following in the footsteps of Jesus, say the Lord's Prayer with your kids as they go to sleep each night through the Christmas season.

"The Word became flesh to make us 'partakers of the divine nature'" (No. 460).

The birth of Jesus – God with Us – teaches us to see and respect the divine presence in ourselves and in one another. Because we were born in the image and likeness of God, we believe that we are all children of God. With that belief comes the obligation to love one another. To treat others as we wish to be treated. To love and respect ourselves with the recognition that we are made in God's image.

Live It: Make a New Year's resolution to respect yourself and others by banishing gossip in your house this month and beyond.