

There were two gentlemen were traveling on a plane and were seated next to each other. One turned to the other and asked, "What do you do?" The gentleman replied: "I am a minister." "Oh," said the first man. "I don't believe in that religious stuff. It's for kids, you know, 'Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so...'" The minister politely laughed and asked the other man what he did for a living. "I am an astronomer," said the first man. "Oh, that stuff," said the minister. "I thought it was just for kids, you know, 'Twinkle, twinkle little star...'"

We have all met skeptics at one time or another. And, we ought to be patient with those who are skeptical of God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Our belief in Jesus—His Incarnation, His Passion and Death, His Resurrection—could seem to be something that seems impossible to a nonbeliever.

First of all, God becoming human? Really? Why? Then, for some, God really loving us? Why would an all-powerful, perfect God love frail humanity? Then, God dying on a cross? How could God die? Why would he not only allow such a thing, but also why would he go through with it? Finally, the Resurrection? A dead man rising from the dead?

Christians believe all this about Jesus Christ. And, we believe because of what is said in the gospel of John: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."*

We believe in Jesus because we know we are not perfect—far from it. We are sinners. We also know that we cannot earn God's love or our salvation. We are helpless. Jesus took on our helplessness. He took on the mortal effects of our sin. He suffered for the sin of the world so the chain of evil would be broken forever. His Resurrection brings eternal life for all who embrace Him in faith.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus at night. He was on a mission. He came to Jesus in an attempt to figure Him out. He came to the conclusion that Jesus cannot do what He does unless He has come from God. It is a good conclusion, yet in his conversation with Jesus, Nicodemus found that believing in Jesus can be very difficult. Ironically, it is difficult only because Jesus made it simple! Jesus simply said, "You must be born again. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

As we enter into the second half of our Lenten season, it's no time for skepticism. It is time to get down to basics. The basic facts of our faith are: God loves us—so much, that He sent His only Son to suffer and die for our sins. It is through the Paschal Mystery of Jesus dying and rising from the dead that we are freed from our sins and have eternal life.

If you are Catholic, you have been "born again." You were born "of water and the Spirit" at your baptism. Now, it's time to live your baptism fully.