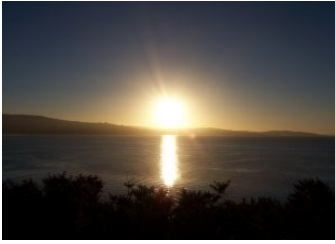


A Mystery to wonder at :« the mystery of the Incarnation »



This first « portal » will help us to situate ourselves as « Family of the Incarnation », taking as our starting point the wonder that Fr. Baudouin had for this mystery..

- **A time of welcome: sharing joys, events...**

Presentation of our name : Family of the Incarnation ! Who are we?

For us, members of the Family of the Incarnation, it is this mystery which is the source of life for us and we are invited to drink deeply from this source.

It is our charism.

It is the aspect of the mystery of Jesus which animated Louis Marie Baudouin, and which he wished to pass on to his disciples.

Today, it is this charism which is offered to all who wish to live it. For Fr. Baudouin the mystery of the Incarnation was not distinct from the mysteries of the life of Jesus. He said : « The Incarnation and its divine consequences... »

A time of sharing : What is the significance of the mystery of the Incarnation for me ?

A phrase used by Fr. Baudouin:

He wrote these words 10 years before his death. They are the fruits of a long spiritual experience .

In Fr. Baudouin's life, some fundamental principles concerning his love of the Incarnate Word :

his time in the « cachette » where he drew up a Rule of Life with the opening words « Our Spirit will be the Spirit of the Incarnate Word »...

the commitment of Fr. Baudouin to religious life with these words : « in the name of, and to the glory of the Incarnate Word ... ». He took as his religious name: **Marie-Joseph de l'Incarnation**.

For Fr. Baudouin the mystery of the Incarnation is a mystery to be wondered at...

Let people admire what they will : all we find worthy of admiration is the Incarnation and its divine consequences. We need no other school, this one suffices (Letter of 25 March 1825)

It would be helpful to read the complete letter of 21 March 1825 (see annexe 1) and share some of your reflections...

Today, what do I admire ?...

Testimonies from a COMMON TREASURE :

*How can we speak of this mystery in the words of today ?
How does this mystery touch our lives ?*

We can read the testimonies of our common treasure . These testimonies are taken from a questionnaire carried out with the fraternities of both congregations founded by Fr. Baudouin, in view of launching the Family of the Incarnation .

The question asked was :

What do you understand by the words « Spirituality of the Incarnation » ?

- **The spirituality of the Incarnation leads us to the heart of the love of God.
God loved us first. « The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ». He continues to live among us : the important message is...he lives.
« Ever since God became man we meet with him in every human face»
(UJ Book of Life)**



- **Jesus became flesh : He was the hands of God, the eyes of God, the heart of God among us, the gaze of God, the tenderness of God...Our spirituality must be inspired by all of this.**
- **The Incarnation, is meeting up with those who are most poor, most destitute, most alone, by our prayer and our mission. It is to contemplate a God who was made man because he loves us, he saves us, and he wishes the best for us.**
- **The Incarnation, it is the mystery of a divine presence, presence in each human being, in nature, in history, in events.**
When we open our eyes to everyday events we see the seeds of life, we see all events as being part of the way of the Incarnation.
The Incarnation is Jesus who is our companion on our journey.
- **To live the Incarnation, is to work the earth continually so as to be like Mary, available to love and adore Jesus who takes flesh in us and in the other, and we must do this daily...**
- **The Incarnation gives meaning to our daily life. Knowing that he is present gives my life meaning.**

Which word, which testimony touches me ? Why ?

The Word of God : « a mustard seed to chew ».

If you swallow a mustard seed without chewing it you will not taste it. This is like people who have a general kind of belief, superficial, without reflection. But if you chew the it well, your palate will savour it. It has plenty of taste. Such are those who reflect and who meditate on the word of him who has sown the mustard seed.

Fr. Baudouin, Letter 23-6-1827



Two texts to keep in your heart :

Jn 3, 16 : **God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that all who believe in him will not perish but will have eternal life.**

Jn 10, 10 : **I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance**

Three longer texts to savour :

- Jn 1, 1-18 : **The Word was made flesh...**

- Lc 2, 26-38 : **The Annunciation**

- Ph 2, 1-11 : **His state was divine**

To put into practice :

The one who reads without putting it into practice is like a sower who casts his seeds too wide. (Fr. Baudouin)

In prayer :

- a time for « wondering at » the love of God who gives his Son.
- welcome this love of God for the world today.
- and for me personally.
- in my relationships and my encounters : how do I look on others ? God loves them too.

Remark : *It is important that each one can leave the meeting, with something to*

*« **practice** » linked with the contents and orientated :*

- *towards **personal prayer**. Even if the initiation to the « distinctive exercise » is only proposed later on one can already live one or other aspect of the « exercise ».*
- *towards « **an action** » which touches our way of living our relations hips with our « neighbour ».*



*May humanity
admire what they will.
For us,
we find nothing admirable but
the Incarnation and its divine
consequences.*

Letter of 21st March 1825

To our dear daughters of Chavagnes.

« **Listen, anyone who has ears to hear,** »

J.M.J.

« **He will be called « Wonder counsellor »** Isaiah 9,6



Let, (my dear Damaris), let others admire and depreciate such and such an object. You fix your admiration like the prophet Isaiah. What does it mean to admire ? It is to consider an object with surprise and astonishment, because of its great beauty, its amazing perfections which were not seen elsewhere. The admiration is complete when she takes away all strange memories from the soul, when she fills her intelligence to overflowing and she charms her heart or her love.

We admire creatures because we have not seen, nor considered, nor tasted the « Wonder counsellor » He alone is named the Admirable one. This name cannot belong to another. [...]

What is it then that delights in this little child who was incarnated in the womb of the Immaculate virgin ? My child what is there that does not delight? The infinite mercy that gives the kiss of peace to infinite Justice ! Weigh that up! Infinity unites substantially to littleness. Littleness without ceasing to be little, becomes immense greatness ! The creature and the Creator are one and the same : a human person is God and God is human and the whole becomes one Christ. The eternal and infinite holiness charged with all the sins since the beginning of the world to the end ! Holiness that loves sinners! It would be easier to unite water to fire. And however that is how it is ! Admiration !

A body...! God has feet, hands, a head, eyes, ears, a mouth! All radiates with divinity! This body was created to be God! [...]

But my soul! What was the admiration at the rising from obscurity in the womb of a woman! She sees herself united hypostatically to divinity! She sees her nothingness and nothingness is raised to the dignity of God! What admiration for her! What humility, What adoration! What gratitude, what love! It does not come to her mind to limit herself and to delight in her infinite pleasure! She wants all people to be participants! She invents the passion, death, the sacraments, the Eucharist! This soul-God sees all in truth! She is united to charity by its very nature! How she loves and respects all God's creatures, the smallest, even those who appear worthless! The most natural virtue to this soul was humility because she was united to truth. The most extraordinary vice in a creature, the most absurd, the most incomprehensible is pride.

[...]O Mary! You are nothing from God, but you see your substance change itself in God! Your blood, your milk! You are an admirable mother by affinity which you contract with divinity! But above above all the angels and all people, you are a pure creature!

May humanity admire what they will; for us, Damaris, we find nothing admirable but the Incarnation and its divine consequences.

If you want to believe me, we will go to no other school! That suffices! But what am I saying ! We are too weak... our heads would never attain that! But they will attain the point of savouring the first fruit of the Word Incarnate, of this tree of life. What is this fruit, Damaris? Clothe yourself with it and you will be nourished by it and your head will become strong! It is humility! It is humility! The fruit of the earthly paradise was the fruit of pride! In Nazareth the fruit of humility was born. Holy Humanity has been, is, and will be the most humble of creatures, because it sees truth more clearly! After it, it is the Immaculate Mother of God.

Dear Damaris, may the Word Incarnate give you the desire and the taste of this virtue and you will be rich in peace!

L-M B P
(Louis-Marie Baudouin priest)