

Item #109 (A Christmas Greeting)

In the year 2023 a former student of mine sent me the following passage in connection with a Christmas greeting. (I have made a few slight modifications). I did not ask his permission to quote it on my webpage, presuming he would approve:

The passage in the New Testament concerning the birth of Jesus is found in the *Letter to the Galatians*: “When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship” (*Galatians* 4:4-5). In an extraordinary synthesis, the Apostle presents the mystery of the Incarnation: first there is the divine pre-existence of Jesus, who is God and Son of God; then his human nature: the Son is at the same time son of man, since he was conceived by a woman. “Born of a woman” indicates that Jesus was truly born a man, from the first moment of his conception and his entry into the world: his humanity like ours, in need of care, attention, tenderness and love. Paul later is a bit more specific: in *Romans*, God sent “his Son in a flesh like that of sin” (*Romans* 8:3), that is, to share a flesh of sin, because he enters a world and a history that are marked by evil, by pain, by human miseries. He took on the flesh that bears the consequences of sin to transform the reality of sin into a logic of love. Hence wherever there is a touch of humanity, there is a logic of love. There, in a sense, Christ is born. **(James Swetnam, S.J., December 31, 2023)**