

The Baltimore Catechism

85. What is meant by the Incarnation?

By the Incarnation is meant that the Son of God, retaining His Divine nature, took for Himself a human nature that is a body and soul like ours.

86. How was the Son of God made man?

The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

87. When was the Son of God conceived and made man?

The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation Day, the day on which the angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God.

88. Is St. Joseph the father of Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ had no human father, but St. Joseph was the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the guardian, or foster father, of Christ.

89. When was Christ born?

Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas Day, in Bethlehem, more than nineteen hundred years ago.

89A. How many years did Jesus Christ live on earth?

Jesus Christ lived on earth about 33 years.



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Was Christ Really Born on Dec. 25?

The peers of the prophet Daniel conspired against him and tricked King Darius, his captor, into sending him to what was thought to be Daniel's doom with the kings of the jungle. As the story goes, Daniel survived the night in the lion's den.

As a teenager of 14, Daniel was one of the first Jews to be forcibly exiled from Israel to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. He was one of four children "in whom there was no blemish, well favored, and skilful in all wisdom, acute in knowledge, and instructed in science, and such as might stand in the king's palace, that he might teach them the learning, and the tongue of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:4:)." These words simply mean that Daniel, at a very young age, was blessed by God.

So much so was Daniel blessed by God that the angel Gabriel came to him and revealed the days of the birth and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Daniel 9:21-27), among many other things.

What makes Daniel's prophecy so remarkable is that it was the same angel, Gabriel, some 500 years later, that first appeared to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. The angel informed him of his son's upcoming birth. The same angel then appeared to Mary to inform her of God's plans for her to be the Mother of God. The same messenger of God who appeared to Daniel to tell him of

the arrival of the Messiah is the same angel who appeared to Zacharias and Mary to tell them of the births of the forerunner to the Messiah and the Messiah Himself!

With a little research we can deduce that St. John the Baptist was conceived around the end of September as told by St. Luke (Luke 1:11-25). This would put St. John the Baptist's birth in June of the following year. June 24 is the feast day of John the Baptist, established by the Church in A.D. 506 to commemorate his birth.

We also know that after the Annunciation (the angel Gabriel's declaration to Mary of her conceiving Jesus), Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth, St. John the Baptist's mother. Elizabeth was six months pregnant at this time (Luke 1:36). Backing up three months from June puts the date of Mary's visit to Elizabeth in March. Nine months later, Jesus is born on Dec. 25. We celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25.

There is an amount of faith we must have to believe in this timeline. If you believe Jesus performed miracles, then it is not far-fetched to believe in this logic for determining the day of Christ's birth. But perhaps more compelling than Scripture's insights to deduce Christ's birth date is what we can glean from Sacred Tradition. See "A Mother Never Forgets ..." on page 2!

A Mother Never Forgets Her Child's Birthday

Sacred Tradition (that which was handed down from the Apostles and Church Fathers as part of the oral tradition) confirms the birth of Christ on Dec. 25. Who would be the source of this Tradition? That would be Mary, the Mother of God herself.

Recall that the Virgin Mary and the Apostle John were at the foot of the Cross during the Crucifixion: "When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother, Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple, behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own (John 19:26–27)." Besides the deep theological meaning of these words, the phrase "took her to his own" means they lived under the same roof (John's home).

Our Mother Mary never would have forgotten the day or the date or the time that Jesus was born. The Apostles would have been keenly interested in knowing this too, so as to preserve and celebrate the tradition of the place, day and time of Jesus' birth.

Would not the shepherds in the fields around Bethlehem have remembered the day and time they were called by an angel to visit the Child?

Would not the Wise Men also inquire of the day and time of the birth of the Child lying in the manger?

Would not Simeon know the day of the Child's birth? Mary and Joseph were following Jewish customs requiring the presentation of a male child to the temple on the eighth day of the child's birth at the time they showed the Child to Simeon, fulfilling the prophecy that the old man would see the Messiah before his own death.

Why Read Quid Verum?

My dearest children: **You are in mortal danger!** I failed to properly teach you the precepts of the Catholic Church and the beauty, richness and completeness of the Catholic faith. Therefore, I have taken on this little project. My goal is to produce this newsletter every month and send it along with little tokens to help you appreciate the gift. It is meant to bring about a moment of reflection and discussion. I love you and God bless you!

All of these people would have clearly remembered that truly remarkable, unforgettable and blessed day!

Jesus' birth on Dec. 25 is further acknowledged by popes, saints and Church fathers. In his article "The 25th of December Pagan Feast or Patristic Tradition?", Hugh O'Donnell reminds us St. Hippolytus marked Christ's birth as Dec. 25. He also notes St. Augustine's claim that Jesus was conceived March 25 on the same calendar day Christ was crucified, and ... wait for it ... the same day God created the heavens and earth 5,500 years earlier!

O'Donnell quotes St. Augustine, who says, "For he [Jesus] is believed to have been conceived on the 25th of March, upon which day also he suffered [died and was buried]; so, the womb of the Virgin, in which he was conceived, where no one of mortals was begotten, corresponds to the new grave in which he was buried, wherein was never man laid, neither before him nor since [referring to Jesus' tomb]."

A great multitude of graces are poured out upon the earth on Christmas Day. In Psalm 43, David asks, "Why are you cast down, my soul, why grown within me? Hope in God, I will praise Him still, my savior and my God." Can't we all use this grace that brings us peace and purpose? Can't we all use this grace to help us see how God is active in our lives?

The world needs our prayerful intentions. Our deceased loved ones need our prayerful intentions. It's a moment of true grace when we see God loves us more than the love we have for anyone in our lives.

This Christmas, let us seek the abundance of graces that are available to us on that blessed day. Merry Christmas!

SCRIPTURE INFORMS

As I was yet speaking in prayer, behold the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, flying swiftly, touched me at the time of the evening sacrifice ...

And he instructed me, and spoke to me, and said: O Daniel, I am now come forth to teach thee, and that thou mightest understand. ...

Know thou, therefore, and take notice: that from the going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ, the Prince, there shall be seven weeks, and 62 weeks: and the street shall be built again, and the walls, in straitness of times. ...

And after 62 weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. ...

And he shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week: and in the half of the week the Victim and the Sacrifice shall fail: and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation: and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end.

SHOCKFactor™

For thus says the Lord, the creator of the heavens, who is God, the designer and maker of the earth, who established it, not creating it to be a waste, but designing it to be lived in:

"I am the Lord, and there is no other, I have not spoken from hiding nor from some dark place of the earth.

And I have not said to the descendants of Jacob, 'Look for me in an empty waste.' I, the Lord, promise justice, I foretell what is right."

- Isaiah 45:18-19