

NOV 2011

BAY AREA TAMIL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

இனிய தமிழால் இறைவனில் இணைவாம்

Advent: November 27th

The Church celebrates the First Sunday of Advent on Nov 27.

Advent is rightfully called a "new beginning" since God's plan of salvation is lived out yet anew year after year. And Christmas is like the rush of new breath, new life, that comes filling us up once again, reminding us of the gift of Life we've been given.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in us a wonder at the wisdom and power of Your Father and ours. Receive my prayer as part of my service of the Lord who enlists me in God's own work for justice.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose Advent we hail. Amen.



CHRIST THE KING

PRAY TO OUR LORD JESUS, CHRIST THE KING

"Almighty and merciful God, you break the power of evil and make all things new in your Son Jesus Christ, the King of the universe. May all in heaven and earth acclaim your glory and never cease to praise you. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen."

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT - DISCIPLESHIP

Today we think discipleship is only for few - the brave, the chosen, the spirituals and the perfect. But, when Jesus chose His disciples He never expected any of these qualities from them. He never looked for any role models or never had any rules in mind. As we read below He chose fishermen, politicians, tax collectors, ordinary people, poor & wealthy, literate and illiterate.

Jesus Calls His First Disciple

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him (Matthew 4:18-22).

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:9-12)

After choosing all twelve Jesus said to them I am not sending you to good people to tell about kingdom of heaven. Instead He said "I am sending you to wolves and snakes". As we read below Jesus openly told them you will have lots of trouble on your way.

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over

to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you (Matthew 10:16-20).

Also Jesus told His disciples that they do not need to take gold, silver, copper, bags, extra shirt or sandals and He gave them power to drive out daemons and to heal every disease & sickness.

After telling them what to do and what not to do and giving all the powers Jesus tell them if you want to be my disciple it should be given from His Father. "Jesus told His followers that no man can come unto Him, except they were given unto Him by His Father, God. Many of his disciples went back and did not follow Him any longer. Jesus asked the twelve, Will you go away? It was Simon Peter who said it was Jesus who has the words of eternal life, where would they go? Simon Peter said they believe and was sure Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. (John 6: 65-69)."

Finally Jesus tells us the cost of being a good disciple.

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels (Matthew 9:23-26).

Yours in Christ
Leenus Rich

ARE WE READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

When we hear the question, 'Are you ready for Christmas?', what comes to our mind? The holiday shopping, the gifts, the search for the Christmas tree, getting down the decorations from the attic, the Christmas cards, the menu for the special meal or the preparation of our hearts and mind for welcoming the baby Jesus into our homes? Which one?

Advent has two parts. One is the memory of the world's waiting for the Messiah. The second one is waiting for his return. The question is, are we ready and prepared like the five wise virgins we read in Matthew 25:1-13, to welcome the Baby Jesus. Before a single decoration goes up, we have to be prepared for the mystery of the Advent's gift.

Reconciliation and Healing:

Advent is a humble season, a season of self-awareness. To say it another way, before we decorate our homes for Christmas, we have to clear away some of the false masks we might wear. Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." He shows great courage, and yes, joy, in doing what is right. It was clear when Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus and accepted his call, he was able to reconcile with Jesus. Jesus also forgave his sins. We can reflect on what we have done and what we have failed to do. We can reflect whether we are faithful, honest, loving and generous to our relationship with God, with family and with others. We can reflect on the responsibilities as a citizen of the country, as the member of the parish, as an employee, as a parent, as a son or daughter. God will always help us

experience the forgiveness and healing in this important role of our lives. Reconciliation is what God does. Receiving and celebrating is what we do in this advent season.

Welcoming:

As we read in Luke 19:1-10, how Zacchaeus hustled down that tree and welcomed Jesus with joy and eager into his home. We can also welcome Jesus with eager and joy. Advent is about welcoming God into our home. We don't have to climb a tree like Zacchaeus, to welcome Jesus into our home, into our life, into our heart. He is here. We have to open our heart and say welcome. We have to be willing to give our own self, material things, time, energy and our joy. We can also slow down from our busiest life style. We can also begin to trust that this will be a blessed time. Then, we can read the Scriptures and pray quietly, "Come, Lord, Jesus."

Advent is letting God's will be done in our hearts and in our everyday lives. Advent is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing graces our Lord offers us. If we let ourselves feel what is in our heart, we know they are filled with love. We can carry that experience with us as we go through our busiest days of this holiday season. God waits with infinite love and with arms outstretched to meet us. Are we ready to welcome him?

Yours in Christ,
Agnes P. Raj

REMEMBERED JOY

While we celebrate All Souls Day in Nov, the visit to the cemetery is always accompanied by sorrowful feelings of the physical separation that we experience of our near and dear ones who have left us behind.

Please read the following poem which beautifully captures the thought from the other side.

**Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free!
I follow the plan God laid for me.
I saw His face, I heard His call,
I took His hand and left it all...
I could not stay another day,
To love, to laugh, to work or play;
Tasks left undone must stay that way.
And if my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss...
Ah yes, these things I, too, shall miss.
My life's been full, I've savored much:
Good times, good friends, a loved-one's touch.
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief—
Don't shorten yours with undue grief.
Be not burdened with tears of sorrow,
Enjoy the sunshine of the morrow.**

- Irish Funeral Poem

MIRACLE MOMENT

"The miracle is not to fly in the air, or to walk on the water, but to walk on the earth." - Chinese proverb

Is there a "now" moment where the heart is not just beating, as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow says:

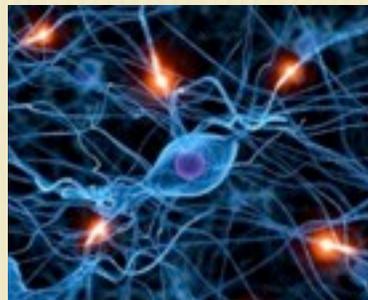
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

Eldon Taylor, author of the book "What does it mean" writes about his own life experience which has a profound message.

"When I was just 17 years old, I was driving a car that stalled on a set of railroad tracks. My side of the vehicle was facing an oncoming train traveling approximately 100 miles per hour and pulling more than 100 cars. The young lady who was with me, her hand on my leg, watched while I tried to start the car so that I could drive it off the tracks. But in what seemed no time at all, the train struck the car. The driver's side was crushed under the cowcatcher (the slanted piece on the lower front of the engine) as the train dragged the car down the tracks and finally threw the wreckage into a weedy field next to the tracks.

My friend Connie was cut from the car with a welder's torch. She asked about me while they worked to get her free, but they told her nothing. Bless her heart, she also worried that her new nylon stockings might have been damaged. Shock often has a disorienting effect such as that.

As for me, I found myself standing a few hundred feet away in the field. Suddenly, as if dropped there and awakened, I looked around to see all



kinds of emergency vehicles, other automobiles, and a crowd of onlookers. I hurried toward the ambulance but was stopped by emergency crew members. They wanted to know who I was, since from my location and appearance, I clearly couldn't have been involved in the accident.

This experience affected my life in many ways. One of those, and perhaps the most meaningful, is the spiritual element. Either a miracle had occurred or I was dead."

Hence we must realize that in every moment of our lives either we are experiencing a miracle or we are dead. The biological orchestration in our body involving 100 trillion cells, the neural and cell level communication are all miracles.

Let us be filled with gratitude that life itself is a miracle and do not look for miracle elsewhere.

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