



DIOCESE OF TIRUNELVELI
BETHESDA C.S.I. TAMIL CHURCH
PUNE



GOD'S PROMISE FOR THIS MONTH

IN THOSE DAYS JOHN THE BAPTIST CAME ... SAYING, "REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS NEAR." MATTHEW 3:1-2 (NIV)

MESSAGE FOR THE MONTH

By Mr. Johnson

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I hope that these days (lent days) will be a blessed days in your spiritual life. The topic of this month was,

"What money can't buy"

...you who have no money, come buy and eat - Isaiah 55:1.

Money can buy many things, but it can't buy fellowship with God or a ticket to heaven. God offers Himself and His salvation "without money and without price".

I know of one man who has a lot of money but also has great inner turmoil. Although he has learned that money can't buy the things that count the most in life, he has never wanted the best of all buys, the salvation of God, which could be his without money. He has never grown close to his wife but has been unfaithful to her for more than 40 years. He doesn't have the respect of his children and grandchildren; he can't erase his reputation as a dishonest, money-hungry scoundrel.

On the other hand, I know a retired minister who has little money, but great inner peace. When he was young he, brought the blessing of salvation. He now enjoys many good things that can't be purchased - fellowship with God, a serene attitude towards death, a wonderful relationship with his wife and children, and the respect of almost everybody who knows him.

Have you accepted God's offer? Acknowledge your sin and ask Jesus to save you. He will give you satisfaction and contentment that money cannot buy. I remember a song related to this, few lines is here

*"Bags of gold can never buy
The happiness you're hunting for
Happiness isn't the money you have
Not the gold, Not the car, Not the dress you wear
Happiness is loving Jesus everyday.*

"Jesus took our sins that we might have his salvation;

He took our place that we might have his peace"

May God bless you with his peace.

Amen.

MISSIONARY STORY FOR THE MONTH

WILLIAM CAREY

("The Consecrated Cobbler") Missionary to India (1798-1838)

THERE was a young man long ago in England who asked some ministers if the Church had done all it could for the heathen, and received this answer: "Youngman, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine." Who was the venturesome young man? William Carey.

Who was it that said afterwards, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God"? William Carey. Who was it that later said, when some one was talking

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of the great mine of heathenism, asking, "Who will go down?" "I will, but remember that you must hold the ropes"? William Carey, missionary to India for forty years. Tuck into your memory these three things, and keep them there, for they are worth remembering.

William Carey is called the father of modern missions. Of course we want to know something about him. In the year 1761, he was born in a lowly cottage, in the little town of Paulersbury in England. His father was a schoolmaster. In this village the boy spent the first fourteen years of his life, and his father gave him the best education he could. But at fourteen the boy was his own master. "The bench was his seat of literature, and the shoemaker's stall his hall of learning." The boy who, when but six years old, used to repeat sums in arithmetic to his mother, which he had worked out in his own mind, was not likely to stop learning at fourteen. He finished whatever he began. He used every chance he had. The room where he worked was filled with insects in every corner, and he delighted to watch them growing. He collected birds, butterflies, and animals, and was also fond of drawing and painting. He was an active fellow, and fond of the things boys love to do. He was a great favourite with those of his own age. As a shoemaker's apprentice, William Carey did his work so well that his master kept a pair of shoes to show William's good work.

While still a youth, he gave his heart to Christ, and was sometimes asked to speak in meetings in a little Baptist chapel which he attended. Thirty years afterwards, the minister who baptized the young man said, "In 1783 I baptized a poor journeyman shoemaker, little thinking that before nine years had passed he would prove the first instrument in forming a society for sending missionaries to the heathen, but such was the case."

At length the church encouraged the young man to enter on the work of preaching, as he longed to do. But his master died, and the apprentice began work for himself to pay expenses while preaching. He married at twenty, and had his family to support. He preached three years at Barton, walking six miles there and back. Then he had a church in Moulton, where he had a salary of seventy-five dollars a year. He could not live on this—do you wonder?—and tried to teach school. This was a failure and he went back to shoemaking. But he and his family lived very sparingly, often going without meat for a month at a time. After two or three years he moved to Leister and built up a church there. All this time he managed somehow to do much studying. He mastered the Latin grammar in six weeks and the Dutch language in a wonderfully short time. Greek and Hebrew were learned without a teacher. In seven years he could read his Bible in six languages. He bought a French book for a few pence and in three weeks could read it. He found it so easy to learn a new language that it was an amusement to spread out a book before him and study as he worked.

By and by the shoemaker preacher was asked to preach before an association of ministers. It was then and there that he said "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." As a result of that sermon, a Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen was formed, in the little parlor of a lady named Mrs. Wallis. She loved to remember this, and her eyes glistened when it was mentioned.

Very soon Mr. Carey decided to go himself as a missionary. His wife felt that she could not go. There were four children, one of them a baby. The minister said he would take his oldest son and go, hoping the mother and the rest would follow. But before he sailed, the mother decided to go, and the whole family set out for India. It took five months for the voyage. On arriving, there were dreadful times and many hardships before a place could be found for the family, and Mr. Carey had to take what work he

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could get to support them. The money brought with them was gone, and the one trusted with it for the company of missionaries did not spend it wisely. Fifteen thousand miles from home, the only way to get more was to work for it. Mr. Carey said that he would not depend on the society at home, but would support himself, and sent for seeds and plants for a large garden. Soon after, the five-year-old son Robert died, and no one could be found to make or to carry the coffin. Men were afraid to touch the little body. Soon the missionary work began, though with many trials. After five years he went to Serampore, where his great work was done. After seven years in India, he baptized the first Hindu convert, who lived to preach for twenty years afterwards.

A wonderful work was done by the Mission Press. Before Dr. Carey died, 212,000 copies of the Scriptures had been sent out in forty different languages among three hundred millions of people. After forty years' labour as missionary, professor, and translator, he fell asleep in Jesus.

ARTICLES FOR THE MONTH

The 2012 Lenten Message of Pope Benedict XVI
"Let us be concerned for each other"

“Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works” (Heb 10:24)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Lenten season offers us once again an opportunity to reflect upon the very heart of Christian life: charity. This is a favorable time to renew our journey of faith, both as individuals and as a community, with the help of the word of God and the sacraments. This journey is one marked by prayer and sharing, silence and fasting, in anticipation of the joy of Easter.

This year I would like to propose a few thoughts in the light of a brief biblical passage drawn from the Letter to the Hebrews: “Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works”. These words are part of a passage in which the sacred author exhorts us to trust in Jesus Christ as the High Priest who has won us forgiveness and opened up a pathway to God. Embracing Christ bears fruit in a life structured by the three theological virtues: it means approaching the Lord “sincere in heart and filled with faith” (v. 22), keeping firm “in the hope we profess” (v. 23) and ever mindful of living a life of “love and good works” (v. 24) together with our brothers and sisters. The author states that to sustain this life shaped by the Gospel it is important to participate in the liturgy and community prayer, mindful of the eschatological goal of full communion in God (v. 25). Here I would like to reflect on verse 24, which offers a succinct, valuable and ever timely teaching on the three aspects of Christian life: concern for others, reciprocity and personal holiness.

1. “Let us be concerned for each other”: responsibility towards our brothers and sisters.

Concern for others entails desiring what is good for them from every point of view: physical, moral and spiritual. Contemporary culture seems to have lost the sense of good and evil, yet there is a real need to reaffirm that good does exist and will prevail, because God is “generous and acts generously” (Ps 119:68). The good is whatever gives, protects and promotes life, brotherhood and communion. Responsibility towards others thus means desiring and working for the good of others, in the hope that they too will become receptive to goodness and its demands. Concern for others means being aware of their needs. Sacred Scripture warns us of the danger that our hearts can become hardened by a sort of “spiritual anesthesia” which numbs us to the suffering of others. ...

What hinders this humane and loving gaze towards our brothers and sisters? Often it is the possession of material riches and a sense of sufficiency, but it can also be the tendency to put our own

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interests and problems above all else. We should never be incapable of “showing mercy” towards those who suffer. Our hearts should never be so wrapped up in our affairs and problems that they fail to hear the cry of the poor. Humbleness of heart and the personal experience of suffering can awaken within us a sense of compassion and empathy. ... Reaching out to others and opening our hearts to their needs can become an opportunity for salvation and blessedness.

2. “Being concerned for each other”: the gift of reciprocity.

This “custody” of others is in contrast to a mentality that, by reducing life exclusively to its earthly dimension, fails to see it in an eschatological perspective and accepts any moral choice in the name of personal freedom. A society like ours can become blind to physical sufferings and to the spiritual and moral demands of life. This must not be the case in the Christian community! The Apostle Paul encourages us to seek “the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another” (Rom 14:19) for our neighbor’s good, “so that we support one another” (15:2), seeking not personal gain but rather “the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved” (1 Cor 10:33). This mutual correction and encouragement in a spirit of humility and charity must be part of the life of the Christian community.

3. “To stir a response in love and good works”: walking together in holiness.

These words of the Letter to the Hebrews (10:24) urge us to reflect on the universal call to holiness, the continuing journey of the spiritual life as we aspire to the greater spiritual gifts and to an ever more sublime and fruitful charity (cf. 1 Cor 12:31-13:13). Being concerned for one another should spur us to an increasingly effective love which, “like the light of dawn, its brightness growing to the fullness of day” (Prov 4:18), makes us live each day as an anticipation of the eternal day awaiting us in God. The time granted us in this life is precious for discerning and performing good works in the love of God. In this way the Church herself continuously grows towards the full maturity of Christ (cf. Eph 4:13). Our exhortation to encourage one another to attain the fullness of love and good works is situated in this dynamic prospect of growth.

BIBLE QUIZ FOR THE MONTH

- 1) Gethsemane means...
A. A quiet garden B. The Olive Press C. The Olive Garden D. In the shadow of the olive trees
- 2) The High Priest that year was ...
A. Annas B. Gamaliel C. Hillel D. Caiaphas
- 3) How many men sat on the Sanhedrin?
A. 25 B. 50 C. 70 D. 100
- 4) This Ruler's Wife told her husband to butt out of the Jesus case...
A. Annas B. Caiaphas C. Herod D. Pilate
- 5) Herod wanted to see Jesus because
A. He wanted to apologize for his Dad's bad temper B. His wife was nagging him C. He wanted to see a miracle D. He wanted to become a disciple
- 6) The title above Jesus' head was written in
A. Roman, Babylonian, & Persian B. calligraphy C. Caesar's name D. Latin, Hebrew & Greek
- 7) Pontius Pilate later...
A. got fired B. went to Spain C. killed himself D. all of the above
- 8) The cause of death listed for a crucified man would be...
A. asphyxiation B. shock C. loss of blood D. heart attack
- 9) The nails were driven through...
A. the feet separately B. the wrists C. unknown D. the palms
- 10) The total number of witnesses who saw Jesus alive was about ...
A. 500+ B. 100 C. 25 D. 12

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