

# **"COME! SHARE IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST"**

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"Do you need salvation? Seek Jesus. Jesus is superior than any of your imaginable Gods"

- Swami Vivekananda in Gnana Deepam: Sudar 7, p. 270

"As far as my knowledge, there is only one person deserving to be called "GURU". He is none other than Jesus of Nazareth"

- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

"A sinless man sacrificed himself not only for others but also for the welfare of his enemies. He became the Tool for the Redemption of the world, He alone is JESUS"

- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

My library in Catholic Information Service Society (CISS) Office has many volumes about these three eminent persons and world leaders. But I did not research and found out the three quotes given above. I received them by e-mail from a friend in South India M.V. Mathew of NOCER INDIA fame. The three quotes prove a point of my message for you.

I do not remember the exact words of a fellow Jesuit, Fr. Samuel Rayan. But his message was very clear to me. In his keynote address during a national meeting of the Association of Catholic Enquiry Centres India (ACECI) at Indore he said, "In evangelization we speak of giving Jesus Christ to the people of other faiths. But you do not have to give Jesus to anyone. For Jesus is there for sure in everyone. People may not be aware of his presence. People may not be conscious of Jesus' presence in their lives. So our job may be to help people to discover Jesus in their lives. One can help people to be aware of the working of Jesus in their lives."

The three quotes in the beginning of this message are not from Christians. But for sure the quotes are from the three people who have experienced Jesus. Their experiences or close encounters with Jesus prompted them to share their understanding of Jesus with others. Hence we have those well known quotes from them.

I see the three quotes as an invitation telling me of the theme of our Ruby Celebrations: "Come! Share in the Light of Christ." How do we do it concretely? Here, a biblical story can certainly help us.

All the Synoptic Gospels have narrated the story of Jesus healing a demoniac - a man with evil spirits. Biblical scholars have done much research and written volumes to interpret the story. Still many details of the story remain unanswered for us.

St. Mark narrates the story: "Jesus and his disciples arrived on the other side of Lake Galilee, in the territory of Gerasa. As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, he was met by a man who came out of the burial caves there. This man had an evil spirit in him and lived among the tombs. Nobody could keep him chained up anymore; many times his feet and hands had been chained, but every

time he broke the chains and smashed the irons on his feet. He was too strong for anyone to control him". (You may read the whole story in St Mark's Gospel chapter five verses one to twenty. See also Mt 8: 28-34, & Lk 8: 26-39).

In the whole story Mark leaves us with a number of unanswered questions. For instance the man says his name is 'Legions'; or "mob" in one translation. Is the word 'Legions' a reference to Roman Legions stationed in Palestine? Mob means a crowd of many. But how many? Let us leave these types of questions to the biblical scholars to break their heads.

What interests us here is just one thing: Jesus' answer to the healed man's request. The man begged Jesus, "Let me go with you!" When the man realized how well he has been cured and how grateful he is to Jesus for the healing, he wanted to join Jesus as a disciple. He wanted to join the select group of Jesus 12 disciples!

Mark continues the narration: "But Jesus would not let him. Instead, he told him. 'Go back home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how kind he has been to you.'" (Mk 5: 18-19)

Jesus has healed the demoniac from Gerasa of his madness. Gerasa is not a Jewish city but a Hellenistic city. The people there have the rare distinction of asking Jesus to leave their territory. They feared Jesus after the exorcism of the demoniac, which led to the destruction of their 2000 pigs!

Jesus understands the situation. He with his disciples leaves the place. But Jesus does not abandon the place and the people. He gives them a missionary, one of their own - the cured demoniac with a great mission. "Go back home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how kind he has been to you."

The cured demoniac has received the same mission like our mission today "Come! Share in the Light of Christ." This is a mission for every baptized Christian. Every one is not called to travel far and wide to proclaim Jesus and his message like a St. Paul or a Mother Teresa or a Pope Francis. No. But every one of us can heed to the mission call like the healed demoniac received from Jesus. Without being a missionary in a far away land among strange people with very different languages and cultures than our own. But in our concrete situation we can proclaim Jesus sharing our lives with people around us how the Lord has done great things for us. Mother Mary has given us an example in "Magnificat".

Recently I saw the incredible performances of the handicapped people in the 2016 Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. People without legs dance, swim, cycle, jump, play games! Similarly people without both hands beat drums and play musical instruments with their legs! The accompanying music says "we can" and "we are super humans." If the handicapped people can perform such unbelievable feats, how much more we are able to perform with all our faculties, skills, talents and abilities.

I am sure, if you deeply think about it, each one of us can say what my mother said at the silver Jubilee celebrations of her wedding. During thanksgiving Mass celebrated at home by her

brother priest (my uncle) she said, "God has blessed our family more than we can ask for!" Today I can sincerely say with a grateful heart that God has blessed me more than I ever asked for. All my siblings can also say the same thing with conviction in their grateful hearts.

Everyone will realize that, as a song says, one life is not enough to sing and thank God for all the great things the Lord has done for each one.

Sharing our life with grateful hearts and recalling the innumerable blessings each one of us received, we can respond to the call: "Come! Share in the Light of Christ."

When we speak of sharing we often think and say, I don't have enough for myself. Then how can I share with others? The problem here is often not a question of not having enough for oneself but of one's mentality, one's attitude. In our selfish mentality we consider only our own needs, not the needs of others!

Let me end my message recalling a story—a historical story—which I read sometimes back. During the war with Spain in 1586 the Commander-in-Chief of British Army Philip Sidney was grievously wounded. He pleaded for water with great thirst. A soldier for want of any water container got water in his metal cap. When Sidney was about to drink the water he saw another wounded soldier at the point of death looking at the water with eager eyes.

Sidney ordered the soldier who brought the water for him to give the water to that soldier at the point of death. Sidney's parched lips uttered these last words: "Thy need is greater than mine."

Do I need to say anything more?