

CHRISTMAS FOR IMPERFECT PEOPLE

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic

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Advent means "the coming." It is an invitation and a challenge to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. We are being summoned (Isa. 43:1), so let us spend quiet moments with Him: to pray, to listen and to learn. When we spend time with God, the good becomes the best. Moreover, Advent is also a season of reconciliation. Indeed, we all make mistakes, we are all sinners, but no one is perfect. God uses imperfect people to fulfill His mission. However, God wants acceptance of our sins, our repentance. Hence, in this season of advent, God wants to see us repent because He will never give up on us, to make amends and be truly sorry for our sins.

1. The **Advent wreath** is a symbol for the 4 Sundays of advent, and symbolizes the four virtues we should have this Christmas season.
 - 1.1. **Candle of HOPE.** Pope Francis urges us to return to the horizon of hope because the Lord is always faithful and He never disappoints. When the Lord closes a door, He will open a better one for us. When our plans fail, God has an even better plan. Further, when God puts us in it, He will see us through it.
 - 1.2. **Candle of LOVE.** We make our sacrifices and withstand all trials because of the people we love. If we want to be happy, let us be with the people who love us. Love is the only one that gives us strength. Since, love is presence, being present shows our love for Him.
 - 1.3. **Candle of JOY.** God wants us to be happy. "... so my joy will be with you" (Jn. 15:11). Happiness is a choice. This does not mean that everything is perfect; but we choose to go beyond what is imperfect. There will always be people who make us unhappy; however, we should not let them succeed. We can choose to smile or frown, to be better or bitter. It is enough to know that

God loves us. Hence, choose the joy of a perfect Christmas.

- 1.4. **Candle of PEACE.** The presence of God gives us peace. It is not the absence of pain or problems. Peace begins with our heart when we have Jesus.
2. **How do we prepare for the coming of Jesus?**
 - 2.1. God wants us to be happy in celebrating His birthday. He wants us to prepare not just our outer being, but our inner being as well. "Rend your hearts ... He is gracious and merciful" (Joel 2: 13).
 - 2.2. God saw all that He made, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31). We all make mistakes. Let us forget the past, and unpleasing acts we did. Let us replace greed with godly love.
 - 2.3. Pope John Paul II encourages us to make every effort to attain reconciliation (2Cor.5:20-21). Reconciliation happens in confession. Why do we need to confess to a priest?
 - 2.3.1. **It is Scriptural:** it was Jesus' idea. God breathed into the apostles the power to forgive.
 - 2.3.2. **It is Historical:** the apostles were present in the early church.
 - 2.3.3. **It is Tangible:** to hear "I absolve you from your sin" engages us.
 - 2.3.4. **It is Practical:** we sit before a priest who is able to give us good advise; he is like a coach who sees things we do not realize.

Conclusion: Faithfulness is not about perfection. Perfection is not about the absence of sin; it is about constancy in trying to get up everytime we fall. It is about getting up and finishing the race. We will never be defeated till the time that we stop trying.

Reflection:

- 1) Am I too bad for God?
- 2) What sins must I confess to reconcile with Him? and with others?

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Tags: #Hope #Love #Peace #Joy #Reconciliation