



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JAMSHEDPUR

BISHOP'S HOUSE, POST-GOLMURI, JAMSHEDPUR-831003, EAST SINGHBHUM, JHARKHAND, INDIA

Rt. Rev. Dr. Telesphore Bilung, S.V.D.

Telephone : +91- 657-2340298 (O)

Bishop of Jamshedpur

: +91- 657-2341582 (P)

E-mail : jsr.bishop1962@gmail.com(P) pajsrbishop@gmail.com (O) Website: <http://www.jamshedpurdiocese.org>

ADVENT PASTORAL LETTER

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Come let us walk in the way of the Lord (Is 2:5). Advent is a time waiting for the Lord with expectation. We recall the waiting of the people of Israel with hope and expectation for the fulfilment of the promise made by God. They were waiting for the messiah. Jesus came to fulfil this expectation and inaugurated the reign of God that comes to its completion like the mustard seed (Lk 13: 18-21).

Salvation is an ongoing plan of God. We are waiting for the full realisation of it till the Good News is preached to all nations and all the people have been taught the ways of the Lord. Isaiah visualises this new order of peace and harmony among the people. "Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instructions, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Is 2: 3-4).

It is seen that the human beings incline to work out their own salvation. They are fascinated with the lure of pleasure and are absorbed in the worldly interests and care of material affairs. Left to themselves they end up in destruction. Pope Francis is calling out all Christians with the message "open up paths to God, come back to Jesus, and welcome the Gospel."

God is always at work to save us. His first coming is repeated day after day. The Church urges us to prepare ourselves to welcome him and co-operate with him in completing one's salvation. Rabindranath Tagore in one of his compositions explains this beautifully,

I had gone a-begging from door to door in the village path, when thy golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream and I wondered who was this king of all kings! My hopes rose high and me thought my evil days were at an end, and I stood waiting for alms to be given unasked and for wealth scattered on all sides in the dust. The chariot stopped where I stood. Thy glance fell one me and thou camest down with smile. I felt that the luck of my life had come at last. Then of a sudden thou didst hold out thy right hand and say, "what hast thou to give to me?" Ah, what a kingly jest was it to open thy palm to a beggar to beg! I was confused and stood undecided, and then from my wallet I slowly took out the least little grain of corn and gave it to thee. But how great my surprise when at the day's end I emptied my bag on the floor to find a least little grain of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept and wished that I had had the heart to give thee my all.

Our whole life is a continuous advent. We are ever waiting in hope to receive the saviour who keeps coming to save us time and again. May this advent season for us be an occasion to make conscious and deliberate decisions to meet the saviour who comes, ever comes to save us.

+Telesphore Bilung

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Bishop of Jamshedpur

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1. Jamshedpur Diocesan Corporation (Reg. NO.385/20 March, 2006)
2. Jamshedpur Diocesan Education Society (Reg. NO.529/8 December, 2006)