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Inauguration of the Season of Advent, November 27, 2022 Weekend

Advent inaugurates a New Beginning in the Liturgical Calendar of the Church and we begin to Proclaim the Gospel of Mathew. Apostle Mathew was a Tax Collector from Capernaum in Galilee. Jesus saw him at the Customs house and called him; "Follow me"(Mt 9;9-13) and he got up and followed Jesus. He was a Jew and wrote the gospel for the Jewish people who were living outside of Israel. He collected the sayings of Christ and wrote them in Hebrew and translated them into Greek. His knowledge of the Palestinian Society of his time, its culture and his association with Christ are reflected in his writings.

Apostle Mathew used the expression "The Reign of God" which the Jewish people expected. They expected liberation from the oppression of the Romans. So, they expected the Messiah to be born to become a warrior (like a Military General to give them victory over the Romans) But Jesus only brought a Spiritual victory from Sin & Death (1 Cor 15:55) not from Political Oppression. Probably the Jewish people were disappointed. According to Apostle Mathew, Jesus the Messiah is present where Two or Three are gathered. But Jewish Society refused to accept Jesus. In fact, they rejected him outright.

During this season of Advent, We the Christian people reflect on God's initiative to come among us a 'Human Being', in our human world. God who is the 'Word' (Is 7:14), Immanuel, God is with us (Jn 1;14) becomes a 'Human Being' taking human flesh. He pitches His Tent among his fellow pilgrims and campers. Jer 23:5-6 Calls this image as "The Branch of Jesse" and Isaiah calls, "The Stump of Jesse" (Is 11:1) Since the Old Testament is all about the coming of the Messiah, Apostle Mathew extensively used Old Testament texts in his writings. He used 41 times the quotations from the OT in his gospel. Therefore, he was well acquainted with the Jewish Law & Life.

Since Mathew was the disciple of Christ, he personally had heard Jesus preach. In his writings, Mathew uses Jesus' very words & expressions. In Jewish Society, Jesus was considered a 'Rabbi', a teacher of the Law and not the Messiah. But Mathew called Jesus, "Son of God & Son of David". His Infancy narrative of Jesus is quite artistic, vibrant and inspiring. His Genealogy is worth noting. Mathew considered this Messiah is the 'Suffering servant of God as had been foretold in Is 52-53.

Apostle Mathew wrote the Gospel in 68 AD in Greek. Mathew was deeply immersed in the teachings and sayings of Christ. According to Mathew, Jesus is the New Moses (the law giver) for his New Israelite people. (Christian faithful) This New Moses is the Son of God. He is the Son of David. Paul reminds in Hebrews 13:8 "Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever". Apostle John attests in his gospel 3:16 "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost, but may have eternal life". "The Eternal Word was made Flesh, He Lived among us". (Jn 1:14) Let us make an effort to delve deep into the roots of our faith during this Season of Advent.

Blessings in the Lord!

Fr. Gabriel