

ONE TOOTH and ADVENT PEOPLE

An old man lived in New Guinea. He made his living by cutting firewood for the mission hospital. Everybody called him One Tooth, because his upper jaw contained just one tooth. Beside cutting wood, the old man also spent a part of each day reading the Gospel to outpatients sitting in the hospital's waiting room. Day after day, he shared his faith in Jesus with these suffering people.

Then one day, something happened. One tooth began to have trouble reading. At first he thought it was something that would get better, but it didn't. So One Tooth went to see the hospital doctor. After examining the old woodcutter, the doctor put his arm around the old man and said, "I have something difficult to tell you. You're going blind, and there's nothing we can do." "Oh no!" said One Tooth. "I'm already old. Now I'll be blind and useless, too."

The next day One Tooth didn't show up at the hospital. Nor did he show up the day after that. One Tooth had vanished.

Later the doctor learned that One Tooth was living alone in a deserted part of the island. A boy who brought the old man food told the doctor where he was. So the doctor went to see One Tooth. "What are you doing here?" the doctor asked. One Tooth replied, "Ever since you told me I was going blind, I've been reading and memorizing the most important parts of the Gospel. I've already memorized Jesus birth, several of his miracles and parables, and his death and resurrection.

"I've been repeating these over and over to the boy, to make sure I've got them right. In about a week I'll be back at the hospital again Doctor telling the outpatients about Jesus.

That story fits in beautifully with today's readings. It fits in with today's first reading, where Isaiah the prophet says: "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly."

John went into the desert in his youth to ponder God's Word. He then came forth from the desert to preach God's Word to the people, saying, "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord!"

This brings us to ourselves in this church. What John the Baptist and One Tooth did, we must do. The spirit of the Lord God is upon us too. We have been anointed to bring the glad tidings of Jesus to the lowly.

Concretely, how do we do this? First of all, we can proclaim Christ in our own homes, to our own families. One way we can do this is by our Advent prayers around the dinner table or, after dinner, around an Advent wreath.

Second, we can proclaim Christ to our relatives and friends. Again, one simple way we can do this is by the Christmas greeting we send them. Christmas is not so much a season of greetings or a Santa Claus story, but the story of Christ coming into the world. Our

Christmas cards ought to proclaim this miracle. Finally, we can proclaim Christ to friends, relatives, and neighbors who have become inactive in their faith. Again, a simple way to do this is to invite them to go with us to Mass during Advent or on Christmas day.

And so today's readings are invitations for us to do what John the Baptist and One Tooth Did. They are invitations to become Advent people.

They are invitations for us to find Christ in our lives; so that we, in turn, can help others find Christ in their own lives. They are invitations to become a light in the darkness of our world, as John the Baptist and One Tooth were.

This is Christ's own personal message to us in today's readings. Now it is up to us to do something about it.

When you actually do something about it, you will know that. ...

You are Loved

Deacon Dan

Credit to Fr. Mark Link