

## 2017 Advent through Christmas Musing

The more I get in touch with human fellows, the more I get intrigued by the Advent wreath's reminding us that only God is the timeless divine being uniting Alpha and Omega, while we are all mortals who are defined by Alpha and Omega within a definite time-frame.

Whilst Advent and Christmas can easily remind us of beginnings, we find Advent also takes us to contemplate on the Second Coming of Christ and reminds us of the end. It's like both baby-baptisms and funerals happen in church: it is joyous to celebrate the beginning of life; yet even funerals are occasions for celebration of life till its end. I heard time and again from some older folks saying in hope: 'I am waiting for the good Lord to take me home.'

That's what it boils down to, both Alpha and Omega: God brings us into being and God comes to us, even in blood and flesh as Baby in the Manger and as Savior on the Cross. God also brings us home, to dwell with us forever: death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. And we respond to Jesus' coming again soon saying: 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!'

Even Christmas carols are cognizant of such seemingly paradoxical truth. In *'O little Town of Bethlehem'*: 'how still we see thee lie! The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight . . . So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven . . . where charity stands watching, and faith holds wide the door, where misery cries out to Thee . . . the dark night wakes, the glory breaks, and Christmas comes once more.' Or, in *'It came upon the Midnight Clear'*: 'Peace on earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious King. The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing. . . The days are hastening on . . . when with the ever circling years, comes round the age of gold; when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling; and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.'

Have a blessed Advent and Christmas, dwelling in its ever-deepening divine mysteries!

Parvathy



## 2017 降臨節及聖誕節牧者隨筆

當我的人生閱歷越深，就越有感於「將臨節花環」所提醒我們的一項真理：只有上帝是超越時空地把「阿拉法(亦即“始”）」和「俄梅戛(亦即“終”）」串連在一起，而我們只是當中受時空限制，有「始」有「終」的受造物。

在將臨節和聖誕節期當中，我們往往因耶穌的誕降而感受到「始」，而將臨節期中有關「基督再臨」的主題也叫我們想到「終」。這也像在教會生活裏，嬰兒洗禮叫我們欣然迎接「始」。而喪禮卻叫我們在哀悼地上生命的「終」的時候仍不忘回望人生一生的恩典而得安慰。我不時聽到長者教友對我說：「我正在遙望天家，等候主來接我回家。」也就是脫離人的限制以跟上主全然契合。

這就是將臨節和聖誕節叫我們看到「始」：上帝既創造我們，也親身披上血肉成爲馬槽裏的聖嬰以成爲十架上的救主。上帝也叫我們看到「終」：新耶路撒冷從天而降，上帝要與人同住；不再有死亡，也不再有悲哀、哭號、疼痛，到時我們回應主的再來說：「啊們！主耶穌啊，我願你來！」

這些「始」與「終」的奧秘，也可由聖誕詩的歌詞中看到：如「小伯利恆歌」中有云：因馬利亞誕生聖嬰，上天天軍齊集。。。萬世希望，眾生憂驚，今宵集中於你。。。我們。。。祈求，聖嬰再臨人間。。。凡有困苦顛沛流離，黑夜消亡，榮光破曉，便是聖誕重臨。。。以馬內利，神人團契，千秋萬古永偕。又如「夜半歌聲歌」中云：緬想當年，時方夜半，忽來榮耀歌聲。。。天上平安。。。天賜特殊奇恩。。。歲月周行不息。。。到時新天新地，共戴和平之君，普天之下，齊聲酬應今日天使歌聲。

祝願大家在將臨節和聖誕節蒙福：以能更深進領悟其奧秘！

李志敏

