

## 2019 Rector's Penning for Advent through Christmas

Liturgically, we have entered another year, moving from 'Year C readings' to 'Year A readings'. For those of us who had experienced many summers and winters, it may feel like 'just another year'. Yet for younger people who walk through more marked stages of growth, they are inevitably excited and passionate about entering 'another year'.

As for me, I desire to join our younger folks in excitement and passion as we step into another liturgical year, to once again prepare myself for keeping vigilance for the second coming of Christ, and for celebration of Christmas. This is not unlike as a child, I always looked forward to Chinese New Year to receive red packets of lucky money from my elders. Eventually I give out red packets to my next generation. What is at stake for me, both in receiving and giving, is the meaning behind this inter-generational passing on of blessings.

Here, what is at stake for me in our walk into 'Advent through Christmas' is that I'll immerse myself once more in celebrating and passing on of God's love for all on earth, through Christ's incarnation, salvation, and walking us towards total union with God in love at the end time.

As I grow in spiritual maturity over time, my appreciation of the 'Advent through Christmas journey' is like my adult memory of my childhood New Year red packets – I still enjoy the red packets' ritual blessing, but I grow in passion to pass onto the young ones around me that blessing of love in joy and hope. So now I am passionate to pass onto my beloved younger (*not necessarily in age though*) believers around me the divine mystery to inherit God's deep love for us through Christ's incarnation, salvation and eventual full consummation of our oneness with God with the Second Coming of Christ.

It is not something which I can wrap in red packets to pass them on. It can only be inherited by you all as my beloved, as you personally experience such divine mystery. What I'm seeking to do over years is to try to wrap them in red packets by pointing to the signs we see and celebrate during Advent and Christmas, praying and hoping those signs will intrigue us all to unwrap the red packet to seek, wait for in vigilance, and experience the Christmas hope, peace, joy and love again and again, as we move from being mere recipients to sharer of the Good News.

I'll keep so praying for you in this wonderful liturgical season,

*Paula Lee*



## 2019 「將臨節至聖誕節期」牧者隨筆

按照教會年曆，我們已踏進了展開新的一年的「將臨節至聖誕節期」。對我們當中已經歷了許多個寒暑的成年人來說，這可能只是平凡的「另一個新的一年」。但對不停地經歷不同成長階段的年青人來說，他們對於「新的一年」總是抱著興奮和憧憬的心來擁抱它。

至於我，我是企盼如年青人那樣，對剛踏進新的一年，是期待能好好做醒準備迎接基督再臨，並慶祝聖誕以記念救主降世以成就救恩。這種情況，就有點像兒時我企盼農曆新年，收到長輩派的紅封包，代表著他們對後輩的祝福，而隨著歲月的飛逝就輪到我派紅封包給後輩，代表著我給他們的祝福。在這當中，不論是「施」或「受」，最重要的意義，乃是這跨輩份地傳送和接收祝福。

同樣的，當我踏上這「將臨節至聖誕節期」的旅程，當中最重要意義，乃是在於我會全心全意的慶祝和傳送主藉基督的道成肉身，施行救贖，並至終拖帶我們奔向最至終的在愛裏與主全然契合。

當我的靈命越趨成熟，我就越感受到我的「將臨節到聖誕節期」情懷，就如我現在的記憶中我在兒時對紅封包的情懷：縱使我現在仍然享受紅封包背後祝福，但我卻更深切期待對我身旁「年青」的一輩傳送叫人滿有平安和喜樂的「愛的祝福」。因此我熱切地向同走「天路歷程」，但經驗較淺的同路人傳遞天國的奧秘，讓他們更深承受上帝在深愛中讓祂的聖子降生成人，且以十架上的犧牲以救世，以至終必要再來讓我們在主裏跟上帝永遠契合在一起。

這福氣不是我可以包住放在紅封包裏的。它只能被你們各人以親身的經驗來領受的天國奧秘。我一直以來費力作的只是把在「將臨節以至聖誕節期」裏我們所能見到的徵兆和記號放進紅封包裏，期待和企盼當大家打開紅封包而看到這些帶指引性的徵兆和記號之時，會樂於去追尋、做醒等待，並一次又一次的經歷聖誕節所給我們的盼望、平安、喜樂和仁愛，好叫大家也開始從領受者而成為傳送這聖誕大好信息的使者。

為此繼續為你們禱告的

*李志敏*

