

Dear Rev. Fathers and Brothers

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” (Luke 2:15) He is the Good News of great joy and salvation and He is Jesus Christ, whom God the Father has sent. (John 17:3)

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census (count) should be taken of the entire Roman world..... While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.” (Luke 2:1, 7) He was counted one among us. He was counted among the sinners and criminals. (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 22: 37) The sinners and criminals could count on Him so that His joy may be in them and that their joy may be divine and complete. (John 15:11)

He did not come to count the righteous, but sinners (Luke 5:32). He counted not just the ninety-nine, but the one who was not in the list - the least (Luke 15:4) God so loved *everyone* that he counted each and every one worthy (John 3:16) and has written every one’s name on the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16)

Not everything that can be counted counts. The inn, the palace, Herod, the Levite and the Priest did not count him and they too were not counted worthy. The shepherds, the magi, the tax collectors, the sinners, the Samaritan woman, the Good Samaritan and the thief on the right counted on him and they were counted for. The chief priests counted him out for thirty pieces of silver. (Matthew 26:15) Judas counted thirty but, did not count on Jesus.

Ananias and Sapphira counted and kept for themselves and hence they were counted out. (Acts 5:1-11)

Those on the right side were counted in since they counted Jesus in the list of the least. (Matthew 25:40) Those on the left were counted out since they failed to count the seemingly uncountable brethren. (Matthew 25:45) Do we count Him among those who lost their lives, dear ones, houses and belongings in Ockhi cyclone or any other challenge? Any day which is not devoted to others with some kind of help will not be counted by God. Not everything that counts can be counted.

Some Greeks who counted on Him requested Philip, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." A CMI - member, house, institution - becomes blessed when someone comes to us with such a request. CMIs will be truly blessed when the people in touch with us say, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). If someone tells about us, "They have taken my Lord away" (John 20:13), we have to return to the temple/manger to bring back Jesus (Luke 2:45) to our lives and campuses. "Maranatha!" - "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Wish you a blessed and joyous Christmas

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