

When the Fullness of Time Had Come

by Tony Micallef, OCDS

One Summer evening, some years ago, my daughter and I were walking the beach, watching the sun go down. And we asked, which sunset did we think it was, which number? How many had there been before it since the beginning? We calculated the number of sunsets since we were born and wondered how many till we die. How good and loving God is! Waiting billions of days, each day unfolding the circumstances that would bring us here today, able to know Him and love Him. God, who was and who is, lovingly plans everyday, every one of them.

Now it does not take much skill to figure out the number of days Our Lord spent on earth. The Gospel tells us that He lived about thirty three years, and so we multiply 33 by 365, the number of days in a year and we get approximately 12000 days. Just a coincidence? Jesus had 12000 days, 12000 sunsets to journey from the manger to the cross. 12000 days of living, learning, praying, suffering and dying for us. We know He is the only person in the history of humanity who was born to die. We are all born to live but He had eternal life already before He was born and so He was born to die, for our sake.

I counted the number of sunsets Therese of Lisieux was on earth. She was born January 2 1873 and died September 30 1897. She lived 9038 days if we count leap years. 9038 days to journey from the crib to the cross. How many do we have? Some of us have lived twice as long as Jesus lived, 24000 days, perhaps more. Some have lived less. But from today how many do we still have to complete the journey?

And as to which day it was that saw the coming of the Christ Child, only God knows. All we know is that when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman. And in some sense we can also say that when the fullness of time had come, God sent each and every one of us with the mission to respond to His love, to love Him back, now and forever.

It is something worth pondering on. How good God is to all of us, how unsearchable His judgments, how inscrutable His ways. The question is. Do we make the best of each day we have to journey toward the cross?

Walking the beach, one Summer evening. We watched the sun go down in splendor, my friend and I. And wondered how many sunsets had occurred since we were born. How many till we die.

And it appeared to us
that since the beginning,
billions of times the sun had risen.
And billions more these rocks and sand
had watched it set. A silent cycle by God ordained. By God's majestic hand patiently driven.

How many days had burst
with human eye unseen?
Which one Adam beheld the first?
Which one, the fall had seen?

Which night was it? We said.
Which one?
When to redeem us from our sins
God sent His only Son.

Countless the number for our finite minds,
we did not know the sum.
But trusted in His words that said.
When the fullness of time had come.