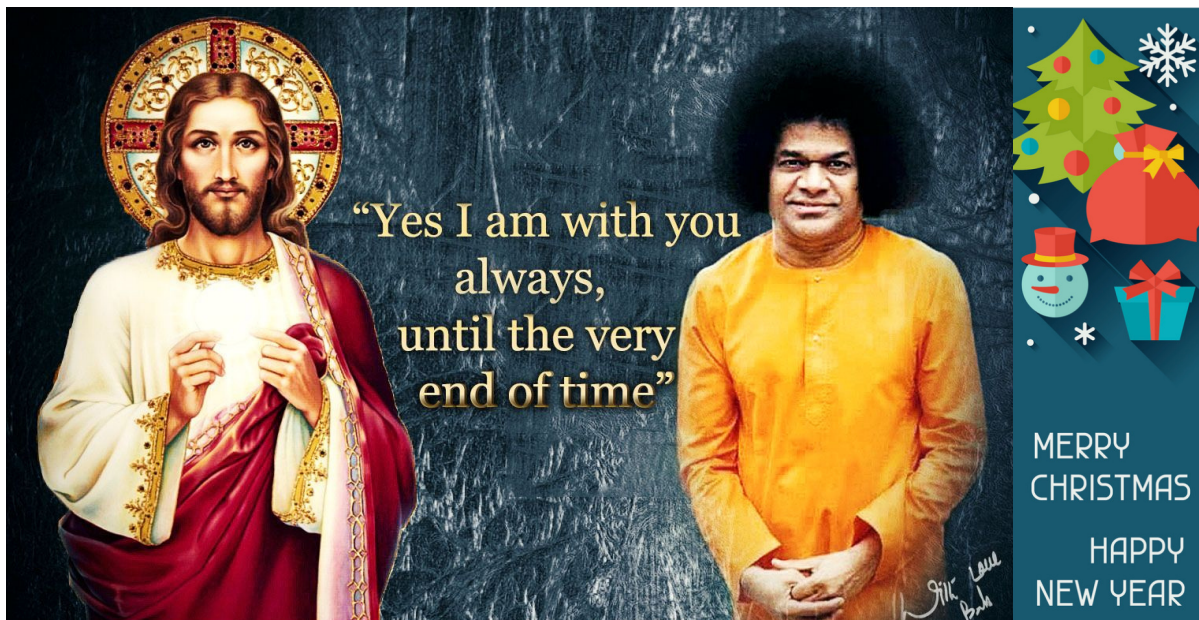


SAI DHARMAM

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA CENTRE OF COOKSVILLE



WHO IS JESUS?

Long ago, Mother Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel, who told her she will be giving birth to the 'Son of God'. Jesus was then born in Bethlehem in a hay stable where Mary had placed Him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. In the area of Jesus' birth, there were shepherds watching over their flocks at night when an angel appeared and told them "A saviour was born, a Messiah, the Lord". The shepherds went over to the stable to see for themselves, and the news travelled about the birth of a new Lord.

Bhagawan in his "Journey in the Jungle" discourses on April 22, 1967 spoke about the perspectives of the Three Wise Men. "One of them, looking at the infant, said 'This child looks like one who will be a lover of God.' A second king said 'God will love this child'. The third king declared 'verily, this child is God Himself'. The first one viewed the child from the physical

perspective. The second, saw the child from the mental point of view. The third saw from the Atmic (spiritual) point of view. The three declarations indicate one can progress from the human to the Divine level". Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord to offer a sacrifice. To this day, Christmas is celebrated to remember his sacrifice for his believers, hence why Christians go to mass service on December 25th. Christmas is celebrated by many around the world with presents, lights, music and festive meals. Importantly, Christmas is the time where one spends time with their family and friends.

References: <https://sathyasaiwithstudents.blogspot.com/2015/12/sri-sathya-sai-on-jesus-christ-part1.html#.X7CBw1NKgUt>, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-stories/birth-of-jesus.html>
<https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/25th.shtml#:~:text=Christmas%20is%20celebrated%20to%20remember,then%20came%20back%20to%20life.>

SWAMI AND JESUS

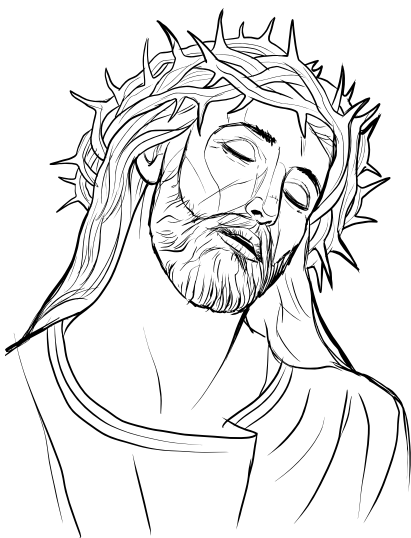
Religion is a way of life and in which culture manifests itself as a blanket of moral and ethical values. With this in mind, Bhagawan teaches us to respect every religion and explains to us the similarities between the teachings of Christianity and Hinduism, to not only understand the significance of Lord Jesus' work but to also awaken our own journey of reaching the Divine. Jesus lived a life of simplicity with a pure heart and a willingness to sacrifice. The message Jesus gave was through his actions. Jesus demonstrated that in order for one to overcome their ego, one should commit to selfless service that can help reach union with God. Furthermore, with respect to the Holy Bible and Swami's teachings, the idea of strong attachment to God is present in both. While the Bible addresses 'attachment' as solely believing in God as a way to overcome past sins, Swami emphasizes 'attachment to God' as a method to reach inner divinity and undergo self-transformation. Moreover, both Saints also give importance to selfless service. Swami preaches that the

highest sadhana (spiritual practice) is to transform love into service. Service will lead you to devotion. When man is not able to understand humanness, how can we understand Divinity? When we develop the qualities of purity, unconditional love and sacrifice, will it be easier for us to merge with the Divine, similar to Jesus.

Notably, Jesus says "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. (New International Bible, 19 Cor. 19:21). From serving mankind, the words "treasure in heaven" acts as a motive for an individual to reach Heaven, where God resides. Thus, the Bible preaches the idea of selfless service by using motives that increase an individual's passion to help the poor and by doing so, will attain divine bliss. Through this idea, one can realize that although different words can be used to explain attachment to God and selfless service, the significance of the meaning between the two remains the same in both Christianity and Hinduism.

References:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+19%3A11-16&version=NKJV>



The Teachings of Baba, and the Significance of Christmas

A reflection by Meera from Group 3

What is the true definition of Christmas? Christmas signifies the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas is a festival of love and affection. Jesus was able to lecture us on love and peace before he died. He was a calm person who taught us to love all unconditionally. In the same way, Swami's teachings promote "Love all, serve all".

Baba taught his followers to avoid regarding Christmas as an occasion of feasting and revelry, but as an opportunity to follow the teachings and example of Christ. Baba told us numerous times that Jesus taught simple and practical lessons. Jesus, through His own compassion and love, demonstrated how we could cultivate these divine qualities. Jesus served the poorest of the poor and taught his followers that they can see and feel divine by feeding the hungry people. Baba also followed Jesus's footsteps by starting programs to feed the poor. Our SSE sandwich project is also consistent with these teachings.

Jesus Christ also taught us about controlling our ego, and how it can influence our love towards others. Ego causes you to think about yourself before others. Jesus was able to put aside his ego and sacrificed himself for the benefit of humanity. This was the reason, on the occasion of Christmas Day in the year 1982, Baba urged "Awaken the Jesus Within You". Baba stressed that surrendering your ego is the most difficult thing to do.

There is one striking parallel between Jesus and Baba. During his lifetime, Jesus experienced insults, criticisms, and slanders. Jesus returned hatred with love, even sacrificing his own life based on his love for others. In the same way, Baba overcame many baseless allegations against him, returning grace under all trying circumstances.

Both Jesus and Baba were born and raised in humble surroundings. Baba stressed only the humble can promote the will of God. In the Bible, it is recorded that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus said "I am washing your feet as your servant, so you may learn to serve the world." Impressed with Baba's teachings, many highly qualified doctors in the west fled to poor areas of India to offer free medical services to the poor. Many wealthy businessmen donated millions of dollars for Baba's worthy causes.

If we believe the celebration of Christmas can only be restricted to Christians, the whole world would lose the teachings of Christ. The teachings of Jesus Christ is about love, which cuts across all nationalities, cultures, and civilizations. The world has become a better place because of the teachings of Jesus.

Christmas is a universal celebration that everybody should participate in. All you have to do is spread your love to those around you. Love isn't something you need to learn to do, but love is what comes from your soul. It's easy to spread love. Practice love and you will reach God. Baba always encourages his followers to celebrate Christmas. He set an example by celebrating Christmas every year in Puttaparthi.





CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Our Father, Who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen

Youth Study Circles

Join us for our first youth study circle of 2021! Our first session will be conducted by Brother Prasaanthan Gopee-Ramanan.

Date: Sunday January 10th, 2021

Time: 10am

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Please feel free to add your ideas and input for upcoming youth study circle themes using the link below!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc12Wv-1AzrCNmU98tEiex1MouKSSnOIHXwLrfgSmnMJW-5w/viewform>

GAME

Click on the link to access the game.
Match the cards together!

<https://www.freememorygame.com/?dn=Christmas+Jolly>

