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Konrad Noronha SJ: Disillusionment and Hope

Richard Lopes SJ: God Serving the Nation

Victor Ferrao: Between Martha and Mary

K. M. Jacob SJ: Working with Santals

Fabian Jose UMI: Mary as Awakened Women

Anthony Raj SJ: Fr Stan Swamy SJ



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Editorial

From Darkness to Light

Deepawali, Deepavali, or Diwali is the biggest and the brightest of all Hindu festivals. It is the festival of lights: *deep* means "light" and *avali* "a row" to become "a row of lights." Diwali is marked by four days of celebration, which literally illuminates the country with its brilliance and dazzles people with its joy.

Beyond the lights, gambling, and fun, Diwali is also a time to reflect on life and make changes for the upcoming year. With that, there are a number of customs that revelers hold dear each year.

Give and forgive. It is common practice that people forget and forgive the wrongs done by others during Diwali. There is an air of freedom, festivity, and friendliness everywhere.

Rise and shine. Waking up during the *Brahmamuhurta* (about one hour before sunrise) is a great blessing from the standpoint of health, ethical discipline, efficiency in work, and spiritual advancement. The sages who instituted this Deepawali custom may have hoped that their descendants would realize its benefits and make it a regular habit in their lives.

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Unite and unify. Diwali is a unifying event, and it can soften even the hardest of hearts. It is a time when people mingle about in joy and embrace one another.

Those with keen inner spiritual ears will clearly hear the voice of the sages, "O children of God unite, and love all." The vibrations produced by the greetings of love, which fill the atmosphere, are powerful. When the heart has considerably hardened, only a continuous celebration of Deepavali can rekindle the urgent need of turning away from the ruinous path of hatred.

Prosper and progress. On this day, Hindu merchants in North India open their new account books and pray for success and prosperity during the coming year. People buy new clothes for the family. Employers, too, purchase new clothes for their employees. This festival instills charity in the hearts of people, who perform good deeds, including feeding the poor.

Illuminate your inner self. The lights of Diwali also signify a time of inner illumination. Hindus believe that the light of lights is the one that steadily shines in the chamber of the heart. Sitting quietly and fixing the mind on this supreme light illuminates the soul. It is an opportunity to cultivate and enjoy eternal bliss.

From Darkness unto Light. The legends, myths and stories of Deepawali indicates the victory of good over evil. It is with each Deepawali and the lights that illuminate our homes and hearts that this simple truth finds new reason and hope.

From darkness unto light – the light empowers us to commit ourselves to good deeds and brings us closer to Jesus, the light of the world. During Diwali, lights illuminate every corner of India, and the scent of incense sticks hangs in the air, mingled with the sounds of firecrackers, joy, togetherness, and hope. May the light of Fr Stan Swamy illuminate the heart of every Indian!

The Editor

Das, Subhamoy. (2020, August 28). History and Significance of Diwali, the Festival of Lights. Retrieved from <https://www.learnreligions.com/diwali-festival-of-lights-1770151>



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