

THE STRAWBERRY

Inspired on a Zen Buddhist Story by P. Ribes, s.j.

Intent of the story:

- ✓ *Enjoy your present moment*
- ✓ *No regrets about the past or anxieties about the future.*
- ✓ *Awareness of the here and now makes life enjoyable.*

The Story

A Zen Master was attacked by a fierce tiger. Running away from the tiger, he reached to the edge of a precipice. To save himself, he hung from a root of a tree bulging out from a crevice of the cliff.

He realized with horror that the root was giving way. Above him, there was the wild tiger waiting to pounce on him. Below, the yawning gap of the precipice ready to swallow him. Death was imminent. He was terrified.

All of a sudden, in front of him he saw a luscious wild strawberry bush with ripe, colorful and tasty strawberries. Forgetting all about the tiger, the precipice and his impending death, the master plucked one of them, put it in his mouth, and with delight said:

"Strawberry how sweet you are"!

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

- Life is given to us mortals bit by bit. The bit that really counts is the present moment, the "here and now".
- The past is gone. It will never come back. The future is not ours yet. It may never come.
- The secret of happiness is to enjoy the present moment. That's all we have in hand.
- If we cannot enjoy what you have in the here and now we shall never enjoy anything in our life.
- If we are dead to the "here and now", to all effects, although alive, we are already dead.
- We spoil a beautiful present pining away about a past that is gone, and worrying about a future that may never come.
- God makes Himself present to us only in our "here and now".
- The present moment is the point of intersection between God's eternal life and our temporal one!
- The present moment is the sacrament of God's presence.
- If we cannot find God in our "present" moment, we are likely to miss him for ever.
- Let us leave our past in the hands of an all loving and forgiving God, our future in the hands of an all provident Father, and enjoy God's love in our present moment.

