# 2C-Advent (short)

MDP of God

In our 2nd reading today St. Paul says, "I am sure of this much: that God who has begun the good work in you will bring it to perfection… My prayer is that your love may more and more abound"

My friends, that idea of Paul that our love should grow and that God can bring the good work He's begun in us to completion reminded me of this little story.

 One afternoon Tommy and his father walked past a park where some boys Tommy knew were playing baseball.

 Tommy asked, "Do you think they’d let me play?"

Tommy's father knew that his son was not at all athletic - you see Tommy was handicapped

He walked with a bad limp - he couldn't hardly bend his fingers and he moved very slowly

 His Father knew that most boys wouldn’t want him on their team.

 But Tommy's father understood that if his son were allowed to play it would give him a sense of belonging.

Tommy's father approached one of the boys in the field and asked if Tommy could play.

The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said "We're losing by six runs and

 the game is in the eighth inning.

 I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat

 in the ninth inning."

Tommy's father was ecstatic as Tommy smiled broadly. Tommy was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field. In the bottom

 of the eighth inning, Tommy's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Tommy's team scored again and now with two outs and the bases loaded with the potential winning run on base, it was Tommy’s turn to bat

*Would the team actually let Tommy bat* - and give away their

 chance to win the game?

If Tommy did bat, would he end up causing his team to lose and be the goat?

Surprisingly, Tommy was given the bat. Everyone knew that it was all but impossible because Tommy didn't even know how to hold the bat properly,

 let alone hit with it.

However as Tommy stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved in a few steps

 to lob the ball in softly so Tommy could at least be able to make contact.

 The first pitch came in and Tommy swung clumsily

 and missed. One of Tommy's teammates came up to

 Tommy and together they held the bat and faced the

 pitcher waiting for the next pitch.

The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball

 softly toward Tommy.-- As the pitch came in, Tommy

 and his teammate swung at the bat and together

 they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could

easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Tommy would have been out and that would have ended the game.

Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond reach of the first baseman. Everyone started yelling,

"Tommy, run to first. Run to first*." Never in his life had Tommy run to first*. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman that would tag out Tommy, who was still running.

But the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head.

 *Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second."*

Tommy ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him circled the bases towards home.

As Tommy reached second base, the opposing short stop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, "Run to

 third."

As Tommy rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Tommy run for home." Tommy ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit a "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

My friends, the perfection that God calls us too is the perfection to love - to care more about others than we care about things of this world

 Things like winning a game - being successful - having a lot of things.

The boys playing baseball that day *- if they had won or lost probably wouldn't have been remembered in a month's time*

[I'm very competitive - I get home with my family and we play cards - and **it's cutthroat** - but you know, I couldn't tell you who won the last game we played]

[The same would probably have been true of the boys in that game]

But Tommy - who often wasn't picked to be on people's team - who struggled with a handicap - who often felt very alone

 Tommy was given an incredible gift of joy

 And Tommy's dad, was given an incredible gift as well

My friends, the fact is there are people all around us who sometimes feel alone - unimportant - discouraged

 And we can, with often very little effort - touch their hearts and lives

*That's how we make ready the way of the Lord*- That how we can fill in the valleys and level the mountains that stand in the way of Jesus' light shining in our world through our lives

That's how we can open our hearts so that God can bring to perfection the good work He has begun in us.

My friends—let’s open our hearts—so God can bring to perfection the good work He has begun in us