



# Advent: Entering the “School” of Jesus

**A**dvent—the beginning of a new liturgical year, the renewed gift of the Father—is an ulterior opportunity to pursue our itinerary of following Christ the Lord in the radiant light of Mary, the Woman of Advent.

The liturgical season we are entering along with the whole Church offers us the chance to contemplate the Father’s Gift of gifts: Jesus, his beloved Son, sent to us as our Savior and Redeemer.

During this liturgical journey toward Christmas, let us allow ourselves to be guided as a Family by our Founder, Blessed James Alberione,<sup>1</sup> who always looked upon Jesus from the standpoint of Master. Consequently, if Advent is a preparation for Christmas, then our gaze should be fixed on Jesus who, on Christmas day, invites everyone to enter his school of truth, holiness and love.

Preparation for this event helps us realize that

we have a profound need of this school. In this time, we should come to recognize how ignorant, full of flaws, inclined to evil and to following our passions we are and therefore cultivate a spirit of penance. In fact, how many errors fill the minds of people, how many false doctrines are preached and how many erroneous maxims are quoted, even in our own ranks! Worldly maxims that can be reduced to this: to consider only the present life and present goods. Instead, we know that the present life is simply a means for reaching eternal happiness. It is precisely because of this that we need Jesus Master, who has made himself our Way, our Truth and our Life. In him, salvation; in him, holiness; in him, the religious life; in him, the priesthood. In him—everything!

St. Augustine says, “God became a human being so that the human being could become God.” This is the “marvelous exchange”<sup>2</sup> that the Liturgy extols. Fr. Alberione reminds us that this prodigy comes about through the “mastication and assimilation” of our Food, Jesus Christ” (DF, p. 11), carried out day after day by the person who wants to collaborate with the Spirit’s work. The supreme model of this collaboration is the Virgin Mary: her assent to the plan of the Father, united to the *Amen* of the Word, made the gift of the Savior possible. And it is through this dynamic action of the Spirit, who works within us and manifests himself in our concrete way of living, that we also say *yes* to God daily so that our proclamation of the gift of salvation will reach the ends of the earth.

It is with reason that Advent is considered the “Marian” time of the year par excellence.

Fr. Alberione wanted us to live this period by growing every day in prayerful reflection until we reach the point of contemplating the manger and Jesus, who placed himself entirely in the hands of Mary and Joseph (DF, p. 41).

Jesus is the model of how to entrust ourselves completely to Mary. In keeping with his example, we too understand that “this is the way: to esteem, love and hand oneself over to Mary most holy” (DF, p. 42). We consign ourselves to the Mother of God by creating around us a climate that favors recollection—what Fr. Alberione called a “spiritual environment”—in which to dwell habitually.

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<sup>1</sup> Our point of departure is a meditation of Fr. Alberione to the Pauline Family on Sunday, 30 Nov. 1952 (*Per un rinnovamento spirituale*, pp. 302f.), and also the text *Donec formetur Christus in Vobis* (DF).

<sup>2</sup> “*O admirabile commercium...*” (Antiphon for Evening Prayer II, Feast of Mary, Mother of God).