



IMBUED with the Word we trace out paths of hope



1st Sunday

Stay alert!

Is. 63:16b-17,19b; 64:2-7; Ps 79;
1Co. 1:3-9; Mk. 13:33-37

2nd Sunday

**Make straight the way
of the Lord!**

Is. 40:1-5, 9-11; Ps. 84; 2 Pt. 3:8-14;
Mk. 1:1-8

3rd Sunday

Rejoice!

Is. 61:1-2, 10-11; Lk. 1:46-54; 1 Th.
5:16-24; Jn. 1:6-8, 19-28

4th Sunday

Here I am!

2 Sm. 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps. 88;
Rm. 16:25-27; Lk. 1:26-38

To be “*imbued* with the Word” sums up the experience of being a “space” in which Jesus, the Word of the Father, can be heard with great freedom. The fact that he dwells within us is already a proclamation, transforming us into a sign of God’s covenant, of his coming. The Advent Liturgy help us contemplate the coming of Christ from the aspect of *already but not yet*—a coming realized in Mary, the “woman-tabernacle” par excellence, in whom the Word dwells so as to “pitch his tent” among us and become *Emmanuel* (God-with-us). Through the power of the Spirit, we are called to *make room within ourselves for the Word* and to welcome him with an attentive, docile and prayerful heart.

The Sunday readings for the First Week of Advent sketch out our itinerary for the season. The prayer of the returning exiles (First Reading) is a combination of *discouragement* and *trust*—attitudes that perhaps we too experience today as consecrated persons and as a community of believers. The Gospel reading insists on the need to *stay alert*. We do not stay alert as an end in itself but in view of what we are yearning for, namely: the coming of the Lord.

The Opening Prayer, which asks the Father to “rekindle our desire to meet the Lord who comes,” implies, in its turn, the act of *going out*, of *leaving something behind*. What must we leave behind as we begin our Advent journey? First of all, our *lack of hope*, our state of discouragement and also our self-centeredness, so as to look toward our goal, which is fullness of life in Christ, who already came, who comes here and now, and who continues to come.

Lighting of the First Candle

*Lord, we light this candle
like the wise virgins lit their lamps
when they went out into the night to meet the Bridegroom.
We want to keep alight in our hearts
the flame of love that is you yourself.
Help us to be ready to arise, wait for you
and welcome you with joy and hope when you come.
Dark clouds loom over our world
but you have kindled your flame in us
and imbued us with yourself, the Word of the Father.
Help us remain alert and vigilant
so as to see the dawn of your presence in the world
and, through our personal and communitarian witness of life,
keep alive the unending hope and joy to be found only in you.
We are waiting for you. Come, Lord Jesus!*

