



Dearest Sisters and young women in formation,

We are at the end of a “pilgrimage” that unfolded according to itineraries marked by the Word, events and days of the Liturgical Year. Advent is at the door.

With the passing of time and the rapid alternation of liturgical cycles, we run the risk—like all believers—of losing sight of the meaning of this season, which is a time of “remembering,” of beseeching prayer, and of waiting for the Lord who comes.

But *when* and *how* does the Lord come? The reply to this question can help us welcome and live more profoundly the mystery of “expectation.”

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father who came in the flesh, is now our perennial *Emmanuel*: God-with-us. From this perspective, there is nothing further to expect... But in reality, Advent directly involves every Christian, who is called to “bring Christ to the world,” to make him visible by adopting his same lifestyle, by loving as he loved and doing good as he did (cf. Acts 10:38).

Because of this, the key verbs of Advent are *stay alert* and *keep watch* (cf. Mk. 13:33-37). In the night of the world, in the night of our present era, the password is to *stay alert*—to keep our eyes wide open—because the Lord is in the darkness that surrounds us. His light illuminates the signs and seeds of good in the apparent victory of evil. We must also *keep watch* by using the power that the “master of the house” left us, his servants: his very own power of love, mercy, solidarity and service.

It means restoring to Advent—a word whose root means *to draw alongside, to come close to*—its true identity. If we draw alongside others, the Lord comes. If we come close to them, he comes.

Sisters, let us allow the Word offered us by the daily liturgies of the Advent season to dwell within us and show us how to be a sign of God’s love in the midst of his people in such a way as *to trace out paths of hope* in daily life. In doing this, we might find it helpful to utilize the supplementary aid: *Come Quickly, Lord! We’re Waiting for You*. Based on the Constitutions and our Interchapter theme, the booklet highlights the elements of each week’s liturgy that can help guide our itinerary.

Among the attitudes it suggests that we cultivate individually and communitarianly are *silence*, “understood as listening to God through the various ways he reveals himself,” and *sobriety of life*, which means balance and moderation, detachment and freedom, a focus on essentials and a sense of responsibility.

In the unique conjunction of historical and economic events that we are experiencing on a global level today, we ourselves should be the first to decisively witness to sobriety of life, renunciation and sharing. To concretize this commitment, I would like to invite everyone this year to help our sisters of Thailand, who are struggling with the repercussions of the widespread flooding that has devastated the country. As always, please send you offerings to the Bursar General, who will see to it that our sisters receive this aid. Thank you as of now for your generosity.

Dear sisters and young women, this year the beginning of Advent coincides with the Feast of Blessed James Alberione. Let us ask our Founder’s intercession that, above all during this journey of preparation for the Centenary of the Pauline Family, his heartfelt yearning will be realized: “In this time, let us ask the Lord in a special way to repeat his coming, that is to say, the Incarnation of the Son of God, but in today’s world.... Above all, let us ask that the Son of God be born in our hearts, in our minds; that he transform us, because the redemption of each person lies in this: in becoming similar to Jesus Christ (*Conformes fieri imagini Filii sui*)” (Pr 2, p. 9).

Very best wishes to all of you for a good Advent journey in the company of the expectant Virgin, the disciple who, imbued with the Word, gave him flesh for the life of the world. With affection and gratitude,

L. M. Antonietta Bruscato

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superiora generale