



Rome, Advent 2010

Dearest Sisters and young women in formation,

In keeping with my yearly custom, I am writing to you for Advent—a special liturgical season during which the Church in her wisdom encourages us to exercise vigilance, hope and a spirit of expectation.

Once again God comes! It would take all the Advents of an entire lifetime to understand the gift of the Lord's coming, welcome the daily call to "incarnate" Christ in ourselves and allow him to grow through the work of the Holy Spirit so as to be "way, truth and life for our brothers and sisters" (Const. 8).

It is not we who wait for God; instead, it is he who waits for us. Indeed, he "explodes" into our life and into our tormented history. This God, who holds the destiny of the world in his hands, accommodates himself to the rhythm of our times, drawing close to suffering humanity and permeating every situation with his love and mercy. Acceptance of God's coming changes our way of seeing things and allows him to transform us into new creatures (2 Co. 5:17).

This makes Advent a favorable time for proclaiming our faith in the Lord who guides history, and it enables us to communicate the joy of a life-altering experience. In the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict XVI writes: "There is no greater priority than this: to enable the people of our time once more to encounter God, the God who speaks to us and shares his love so that we might have life in abundance."

Illuminated by the Word of the Advent liturgies, especially the Sunday Gospels (the four "stars" of Advent:¹ *the star of preparation*: Mt. 24:37-44; *the star of choice*: Mt. 3:1-12; *the star of perplexity*: Mt. 11:2-11, and *the star of mystery*: Mt. 1:18-25), let us revitalize our commitment to being communicators of *the Word made flesh*.

Our efforts to do this could be facilitated by the third stage of our animation on the Constitutions, during which we are reflecting more deeply on the chapter dedicated to *proclaiming Christ with the means of social communication*. Another aid in this endeavor is the Christmas Novena, *Following Our Path, We Meet the Lord Who Comes*, which was prepared in the light of our Rule of Life.

Dear sisters, let us await the God-who-comes by cultivating a deeper spirit of prayer, by focusing on essentials and by acting in a united way for the good of the poorest members of society. In view of this, I invite us all to make concrete choices that will help us live in greater simplicity, in harmony with the convergence of particular contemporary events with the worldwide economic crisis. The fruit of your "renunciations" can be sent to the Bursar General and will be used to assist the people of Haiti, devastated first by an earthquake and then by cholera and malaria epidemics. Thank you as of now for your readiness to generously participate in this initiative.

I entrust to your prayers our upcoming Interchapter Meeting on the theme: *Imbued with the Word, We Trace Out Paths of Hope*, to be held in the St. Paul House in Rome from 4-21 Feb. 2011. Let us all consider ourselves participants in this important congregational event and allow ourselves to become involved in its preparation and realization by striving to discern the will of the Father so as to understand "where the Lord is leading us."

May our Founder, Blessed James Alberione, whose feast day is 26 November, intercede for us, asking on our behalf that we will allow ourselves to be "inhabited" by the Word this Advent so as to perceive, with the eyes of faith, the presence of God-with-us today and use every instrument of communication to irradiate the Truth that saves, the Love that regenerates and the Hope that urges us to move ahead.

Best wishes to everyone for a good Advent! With deep affection,

S. M. Antonietta Bruscato
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Superior General

¹ A brief reflection and prayer for each Sunday of Advent based on this "four-star itinerary" can be found on our www.paoline.org web site.