

FIRST SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT  
2017



# Go Against the Tide

During this Advent season, let us meditate on the way in which God enters the lives of human beings: how he is incarnated and born on this earth and in the life of each one of us. Contemplating his descent into the human heart, we note that God reveals to us a “journey in reverse.” He shows us how to imitate certain fish and go against the tide so as to reach the point of welcoming, through his grace, the mystery of Christmas and discovering some essential steps for making our spiritual journey beneficial.

If we are to walk the path of the Spirit, we must embrace the logic of paradox. We must abandon the logic of utility and convenience and allow ourselves to be surprised by the amazing work of God, who can transform every evil into good, every war into peace, every hate into love, every defeat into victory. Our God can make sterile wombs fruitful; he can enable a virgin to give birth; he chooses the foolish of this world to confound the wise, and the weak of this world to overcome the strong.

The Advent journey on which we are embarking contains some paradoxical elements: it is a time of waiting for Someone who is not expected, who is indeed greater than our human expectations. It is a time of going forth to meet the Lord-who-comes. But our longing, no matter how ardent, is always eclipsed by the ardor of God, who yearns to be welcomed into our waiting arms. And when this embrace takes place on Christmas night, we will see the fulfillment of the four steps we are timidly attempting to take on our spiritual journey—steps spoken about in the Scripture readings in the Sundays of Advent and on Christmas day, namely: *to see the invisible God, to allow his mystery to shine forth, to become small so as to welcome his immensity, and to cultivate hiddenness so that his glory might be revealed.*

On this journey “against the tide,” we are sure to encounter astonished looks, run into obstacles, experience slowdowns and falls. Everyone who wants to follow the Lord must be prepared to meet temptations, but let us set out with the courage and trust of those who know that the whole Church is on the move and thus we will never be alone on our journey.

Fr. Renato Tarantelli Baccari



## Prayer

Lord, you come among us  
to show us how to courageously  
blaze new trails through the deserts of this world,  
how to love what is apparently unlovable,  
how to defend those who are the “least.”  
Please give us the strength to imitate your liberty.