



Dearest sisters and young women in formation,

I do not usually write to you for Advent, but the desire to do so has matured in me during this time in which I am flying from one city to another in Bolivia, Peru and Mexico, meeting our sisters and listening from the heart to their joys, hopes and struggles.

This year, the feast of Blessed James Alberione stands at the portal of our entry into the new liturgical year—a “pilgrimage” that begins with Advent and winds along the itineraries marked by the Word, by events, by our activities, and by the days the Lord gives us.

I have been reflecting on how many Advents have passed in my life, often almost without my realizing it. Four weeks that slip by with extraordinary speed in the daily whirlwind of many “sacred” commitments, many things to do and to think about...

This year, no. This year I would like to experience, together with all of you, the “calls” of Advent: the call to put a break on our frantic rhythm of existence and become aware of what is happening in and around us; the call to notice the toils of those in our vicinity and the sorrows of humanity; the call to savor the gifts, goodness and beauty around us; the call to pause and be still, allowing God to enter our hearts so as to console us, give us strength and audacity, enlighten us about the meaning of things and events, and experience the “acerbic bliss of waiting...waiting for the greatest, deepest, most delicate things, which do not happen tempestuously, but according to the divine law of germination, growth and development” (D. Bonhoeffer).

My dear sisters and young women, let us invoke the intercession of our Founder this Advent, asking that his yearning might be realized:

May we use this time to ask the Lord in a special way to repeat his coming, that is, the Incarnation of the Son of God in today’s world... Above all, let us ask that he be born in our hearts and minds; that he transform us, for in this lies the redemption of each one of us, who are called to become like Jesus Christ: *Conformes fieri imagini Filii sui* (RSP, p. 304).

May you all have a beautiful Advent journey in the company of the Virgin of waiting and silence—the disciple-missionary who, inhabited by the Word, clothed him with flesh for the life of the world.

With deep affection, in communion of joy and hope.

S. Anna Caiazza
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