

Dear Sisters,

the Advent has just begun and soon it will be Christmas; Christmas once more!

And we feel once again not ready for it!

This month's liturgy takes us by hand and lets Mother Mary accompany us, as she has lived her waiting better than anybody else. Mothers more than any other people know how to wait, they know it from their body. We have not been mothers physically, but we were mothers and still are so, every time we have created life around us, by lending our poor life to Jesus, so that in us and through us He could be recognized as our Brother.

I want to share with you some thoughts resulting from Father Hermes's beautiful and profound reflections on Advent and Christmas (*Fr. Hermes is a Servant of Mary who has commented weekly the Sunday Gospels on TV, for the last five years ...*). Some of his considerations can really help us to revive Jesus' coming in our hearts, in our history and also in our weakness.

Waiting and attention are the words of Advent. Advent is a word that in its roots means **coming next, getting close**. It is the time when everything becomes closer: God to man, the other to me, myself to my heart. Advent becomes the right time to shorten distances, experiencing the **"waiting and the attention"**. *Waiting* for God, the One who comes; for God who comes to every man.. All creatures are waiting; the wheat, the night, the whole creation awaits for God's coming! God shows me how to wait: the world is fragile and sick, but the Christian / consecrated person does not run away; he/she intercedes, walks in the world taking care of wounds as well as of new shoots.

Attention: "...be careful not to overcharge your hearts" (Lk 21,34). Let's live carefully, because "the most severe plague is modern superficiality" *Attention to what?* To one's heart, because it is the house of life, *attentive* to others, to their silent questions, their talents, so to be able to see their hidden treasures. Beware of the daily routine, and to the Lord who passes every day in ordinary things in our lives. The Incarnation is not over, now is the time of my Christmas: **God is born so that I can be reborn.**

How did Maria expect Jesus?

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ..and Behold, you will conceive a Son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. "(Luke 1: 26-31); "... Nothing is impossible with God." Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your Word". (Luke 1: 36-38).

At Christmas, the Word is a child who cannot talk and doesn't scare anybody.

The Lord is a newborn. The God who had formed Adam from the dust of the earth, now makes himself dust of our soil.

The Word became a small clay pot;

the Word became man, indeed a baby;

the Word was made hunger: think of the child looking for the mother's milk;

the Word was made tenderness : think of the hugs that Jesus reserved for children;

the Word was made tears: think of his weeping at the tomb of Lazarus;

the Word was made dust, saliva and new eyes: think of the healing of the blind;

the Word was made lamb: think of the cross and his sacrifice.

At Christmas God is like a man who is not scary; he relies, lives only if someone loves him and cares for him. Like any newborn, Jesus will live because he is loved. God is like a child in need of care and love, as we were and we still are. Christmas is not an emotional celebration, but a revolutionary conversion of the story. The big wheel of the world had always turned in one direction: the bottom was functional to the top, the small to the big, the weak to the strong. When Jesus was born, the movement of the story stops for a while and then starts to flow in the opposite direction: ***the STRONG is a servant*** of the weak, the ***ETERNAL journeys*** through time with us, **the INFINITE is contained in the fragment.**

But even if Christ were born a thousand times in Bethlehem, and we are not born every day, He would have been born in vain: God needs you, me, each of us.

No life is too poor, or too small, or too simple, or too sick not to serve the Lord; let's no longer say: my life is too limited for the Lord's service and love.

Poverty, old age, disease are not obstacles, but resources; weakness is not an obstacle but an opportunity for the Lord, who came not to conquer the world but to love it.

Is this not a wonderful opportunity to entrust Him, helpless child, all our difficulties, weaknesses, limitations, physical problems, but at the same time to thank him for the talents and all the positive and beautiful gifts we have received from Him through our parents at the time of our birth?

HAPPY ADVENT and MERRY CHRISTMAS to ALL and EACH ONE of YOU sr. Angela