

**Homily for First Sunday of Advent
December 3, 2017**

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In the first reading of the prophet Isaiah, there is a question that helps us in our reflection, “*Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?*”

This means, that man is aware and knows, when he moves away from the Lord. When he moves away from the Lord's commandments, then the heart becomes hardened. And a hardened heart will never hear the call to conversion and sanctification, much less will it be able to recognize the Messiah.

At this beginning of the liturgical year, we have the best opportunity, to make an examination of conscience, to enter into the depths of our hearts and know what separates us from God.

The preparation for Christmas starts from the joy of the heart. Not expensive ornaments that sometimes takes a long time to place. It is not the Christmas tree or the gifts. It's not the Christmas Eve dinner. It is not the holidays to the sea, the mountain or the visit of distant relatives.

The preparation for Christmas is, go to the confessional and reconcile with your neighbor. The preparation for Christmas is to visit the sick, help the poor, and feed the hungry. The preparation for Christmas is to open the doors of trust, of comprehension, of love.

St. Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians, says: I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge.

Word and knowledge, are the blessings in abundance that God gives us to discover his Son Jesus, where he was born? How was he born? What was the promise fulfilled? What signs accompany this revelation? What is the divine mystery?
Only through the Word and knowledge do we discover the mystery of God, discover the invitation of God, and discover the fullness of life.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us take advantage of this advent season to reflect on the Word of God and discover the salvation that awaits us with the birth of Jesus.

Advent is four weeks of preparation, and this means that it is an invitation to fasting, prayer and penance. Read the Sacred Scripture and have acts of mercy.

To wait with joy for the birth of Jesus, so that peace and joy may flood our world, our society, our family, our heart of hope, light and faith.

May the next birth of Jesus motivate us to change and fight for our world full of evil and injustice, of abuse and death, of hatred and division.

Therefore, it is necessary to prepare with divine help so as not to fall into the temptation of indifference, of materialism, of permissiveness, of intolerance.

Preparing for Christmas is reconciliation, opening up new ways of living together, helping the most vulnerable and unprotected, from conception to natural death, is helping young people who start with the commitment to collaborate with society through their study and work.

It is respecting and not forgetting the elderly taking them to the nursing home and just waiting to be warned when they are already dying or have died, when they always expected a hug, a caress, a personal attention, an accompaniment, because they never stop feeling and to want, to expect the best of the family, to see the grandchildren grow up, to get together at night to talk and watch TV. Because grandparents are never, or will be a hindrance, but are the best and greatest treasures of the family.

Finally remember the invitation of Jesus, "Be watchful! Be alert! That is, that these four weeks we will participate actively so that our spirit and our soul prepare, be awake to receive the Savior of the world.