



Reflection from the Superior General

Advent 2025

Dear Confreres,

Fraternal greetings!

We have entered the Advent season which for many will be a busy time of pastoral and other commitments. In fact, we can become so caught up with all that we have to do, including our various preparations for the Christmas celebrations, that Advent can pass us by and we fail to experience its true meaning.

Advent is a season of hopeful waiting. Waiting patiently is not something that comes naturally to us. But Advent is more – it is also a prayerful waiting. Without a commitment to personal and common prayer we risk being pushed this way and that, distracted and even exhausted by the time we celebrate the coming of our Saviour.

Instead, as we ponder the coming of Christ and his kingdom during these weeks of Advent, we are invited to reorient our lives towards the values of his kingdom – peace, reconciliation and love of neighbour. In this way our Advent time can become a transformative journey where our lives become more conformed to the person of Christ, and where we can say with Paul, “it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

In a recent meeting of over 150 superior generals with Pope Leo, in which I participated he said, “the first relationship to cultivate is our relationship with God”. This is why “prayer is fundamental in the life of every consecrated person”—that “relational space in which the heart opens to the Lord, learning to ask and to receive with trust.”

In prayer, he added, “we bear witness to who we truly are: creatures in need of everything, abandoned to the provident and benevolent hands of the Creator.”

During this season of Advent, I encourage communities to hold a day or half-day of recollection where there is such a “relational space” for prayer, lectio and faith sharing. Perhaps too it could be a “non-digital” day when we switch off our devices! Pope Leo has spoken of how our communities, including religious communities, should become “places of encounter where the Gospel is lived with tenderness, mutual trust, simplicity and joy.”

Advent hope is not a passive but rather an active hope. Pope Leo further reminds us that the Church, if she wants to be Christ’s Church, must stand where Christ stands: among the forgotten, the wounded, the excluded, the young who search for meaning, and families who struggle to remain united. Love cannot be a sentiment alone; it must become a decision to walk with others, to carry burdens and to bring hope where life has grown dark. Our faith, while personal, cannot be confined to the private sphere. Rather, our encounter with others, especially those on the margins, is an encounter with Christ himself. Leo continues: “Our love and our deepest convictions need to be continually cultivated, and we do so through our concrete actions. Remaining in the realm of ideas and theories, while failing to give them expression through frequent and practical acts of charity, will eventually cause even our most cherished hopes and aspirations to weaken and fade away... Christ can only be truly received by giving oneself generously to one’s brothers and sisters” (Dilexi te, 119, 64).

Finally, in a world ravaged by conflicts, let us pray this Advent for peace, for the peacemakers, and for the grace to work toward a society where the values of love and charity prevail.

I wish you a blessed and peaceful Advent.

Kindly and in the Spirit of Mary,

Declan Marmion, S.M.