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Meditations: Sunday of the Fourth Week of Advent (Year B)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer as we await the Child Jesus' arrival at Christmas.

- Mary's Advent
- Our Lady's *fiat*
- A fidelity shown in service

SHOWER, O HEAVENS, FROM ABOVE, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit (Is 45:8). We have reached the

fourth Sunday of Advent. It is a time of hope, and Mary is now the focus of all human expectation. Our Lady has been chosen by God. God has looked upon the earth with mercy and set his eyes on the woman of Nazareth. *As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the young women (Song 2:2).* Advent is thus a particularly Marian season, and how natural it is to live it with our eyes set on Our Lady! The desires in Mary's heart are both simple and strong. She already dreams of enfolding the Child in the deepest affections of her heart.

We know that the woman chosen to bring light into the world conceives Jesus by the working of the Holy Spirit. Everything was prepared from all eternity, God has always thought of Mary: *from the first, before the beginning of the earth (Prov 8:23).* Filling her with his grace, He destines her to a holiness unique among creatures. By raising Mary above all

creation, even above the angels, God has given us all a gift. Since Mary is our Mother and Lady, we can firmly trust that we will one day reach the happy end of the road, where she awaits us.

It is a good time to follow Saint Josemaría's recommendation and exclaim: "Mother, my life, my hope, lead me by the hand. And if there is anything in me displeasing to my Father God grant that I may see it, so that, between the two of us, we may uproot it.' And don't be afraid to continue: 'O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary, pray for me, that by fulfilling the most lovable Will of your Son, I may be worthy to obtain and enjoy what Our Lord Jesus has promised.'"^[1]

MARY WAS THE FIRST PERSON on earth to know that the Redeemer had come. Her personal Advent, the first in history, began when the angel

spoke to her in the solitude of her home: *You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High* (Lk 1:31-32). Mary does not hesitate. The maiden of Nazareth lives attentive to the divine will, in an attitude of listening. The angel comes into her life, conveys the divine message and finds an immediate response: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Let it be done to me according to your word* (Lk 1:38). And “at the enchantment of this virginal phrase, the Word became flesh.”^[2]

Thus Mary’s Advent began. “Let it be done to me” is the expression of a heart in which God finds his home. “Mother, Oh Mother! With that word of yours – *Fiat, Be it done* – you have made us brothers and sisters of God and heirs to his glory. Blessed art thou!”^[3] This is an expression that sums up a whole life. We too can

repeat many times “fiat,” “let it be done,” in thousands of different ways. Looking at Mary, we learn from her how to obey God. “Our Lady listens attentively to what God wants, ponders what she doesn’t fully understand and asks about what she doesn’t know. Then she gives herself completely to doing the divine will ... Isn’t that marvellous? Mary Most Holy, our teacher in all we do, shows us here that obedience to God is not servile, and does not bypass our conscience; it moves us intimately to discover the ‘freedom of the children of God’ (cf. *Rom* 8:21).”^[4]

Our Mother is an exquisite model of fidelity and abandonment to God’s redemptive plan. During these final days of Advent, Mary’s words give voice to the desires in our heart. “Let it be done to me” is a prayer that prepares us to be a dwelling place worthy of the Saviour. When we seek

to imitate our Mother, Mary “looks at us as God looked at her, a humble young girl of Nazareth, insignificant in the world’s eyes but chosen and precious to God.”^[5]

AFTER THE CONVERSATION with the archangel Gabriel, Mary is neither frightened nor self-absorbed. Amid the excitement in her soul on learning all that God has done for her, she makes plans to take care of her pregnant cousin. That is what Mary’s Advent is like: when she hears the news, she leaves for Elizabeth’s house, without worrying about other things, even though she too is pregnant and has many tasks to do before the arrival of her Son.

Mary has learned on a daily basis to take care of others. This is what makes her happiest. Hers is an active waiting for the Messiah, made up of kindness for those around her. Mary shows us the path for Advent: first of

all to listen attentively to God's voice, and then to open ourselves to the concerns of others in order to serve with joy. In Mary's life the hours do not simply "pass by." She lives each second with the intensity of knowing that God has chosen her, and with her eyes set on the people around her.

"The scene of the Visitation also expresses the beauty of the greeting. Wherever there is reciprocal acceptance, listening, making room for another, God is there, as well as the joy that comes from him."^[6] As we contemplate Our Lady's humble self-giving, we ask her as good children to help us so that the Lord Jesus, when he comes at Christmas, may find in us a heart that is well disposed. We want to live these days like our Mother, who in that first Advent was led by God's surprises to serve those at her side.

[1] Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, 161.

[2] Saint Josemaría, *Holy Rosary*, First Joyful Mystery.

[3] Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, 512.

[4] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, 173.

[5] Pope Benedict XVI, Address, 8 December 2010.

[6] Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, 23 December 2012.

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