



Instituto Calasancio

Hijas de la Divina Pastora

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Is 52, 7)

Vigo, November 30, 2023

**To the sisters and religious communities,
To those who share the Calasanctian Educational Mission
Of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess,
To those who feel attracted by the Calasanctian Charism
Of Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess,
Bequeathed by Saint Faustino Míguez de la Encarnación.**

J.R.E.N.C.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The attitude of the believer who lives Advent in all its depths is to go out to meet God, to open ourselves to his love and to respond to his call to serve our brothers and sisters.

Advent is a privileged time to be bearers of Christ; to bring him into our lives as Mary bore him in her womb; to fill ourselves with the desire to live the same sentiments as Christ and to enlighten the world with the light of the Saviour.

Prayer can help us to unravel in our lives this presence of Jesus who draws near and brings joy. Jesus brings a small desire for God, a small flame of love, bread shared with the poor. Jesus brings us a different way of looking, of listening, of accompanying, of healing. Let us ask ourselves how we look at others; whether we look at the heart or remain superficial. Advent invites us to know how to look at the light that Christ brings us in ourselves, in the eyes of others, in God's gaze towards us.

In Advent, we prepare ourselves for God to burst into our hearts with his newness and his gratuitousness. Jesus invites us to dare to awaken the best in ourselves, and to have our lives transformed, renewed and changed. In this way, our life will bear the fruits of welcome and hope that God wants it to bear: compassion, hospitality, kindness, fraternity, justice, solidarity.

Today we live in a very complex world, in which violence, revenge, wars, injustice abound, and in which the people around us need to hear words of encouragement, healing, help to get out of their own darkness and to find paths of light, dignity and justice.

In Advent, we, as the Calasanctian family of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess, are called to offer spaces of listening and welcome, of recognition and dignity; to have attitudes of compassion and inclusion, of tenderness and kindness, to lower ourselves and accompany the little ones, the young, the unrecognised woman. It is a time of opportunity and of cultivating hope, a time to prepare ourselves to dream and to work for goodness and fraternity.

Advent prepares us to welcome the coming Jesus; it prepares us to be a different and new vessel to welcome the Light that Jesus brings and that comes to illuminate our lives and to fill us with its warmth. Advent prepares us to be a light to the world, with our witness and our way of life, reflecting the light of Christ at all times.

For our daily life to be light for the world, we must seek an intimate relationship with God through prayer, listening to the Word, helping others by giving ourselves, simplicity of life, trust in God, as St. Faustino Miguez says: *He is the master of the world, he is the Almighty, his nobility is heavenly. None so faithful. None so beautiful. He is eternal and loves us from everlasting to everlasting and makes us happy now and forever.* (Ep 107)

The Lord comes to meet us; He seeks us out. And Mary stands at our side to teach us how to welcome Jesus, how to open ourselves to his presence, to his Light, how to listen to his Word. Together with her, the first believer, we learn what faith is and how to open ourselves to his grace.

We thank Jesus for this time of Advent, because he comes to give us the Good News that God continues to live in our midst and that he is the messenger who brings peace and salvation to the world.

With deep affection.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Ma José Sotelo Iglesias'.

M. Ma José Sotelo Iglesias
Superior General