

# Advent 2017



*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked on the lowliness of his servant.*

Dear Sisters:

During this season of Advent I would like to focus on joy. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis has launched for us a call to place it at the center of our Christian life. "The joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the whole life of those who encounter Jesus" (EG 1). When I read this phrase for the first time it struck me a lot. It does not say "must fill", or "sometimes". It says "it fills". A clear affirmation, as we would now say, "yes or yes". If there is an encounter with Jesus, this fills with joy.

We can ask ourselves : Is it the joy of the Gospel that fills my heart and my life? What would happen if instead of putting the joy of the Gospel we put other things that, sometimes, fill our life more? For example, stress, worry, burden, demand, perfectionism .... Each one will have her personal "parasites". Surely if we do this little exercise, we will feel the need to recover "the joy of the Gospel".

Therefore, if this joy comes from the personal encounter with Jesus, from allowing Someone to come to our own life and renew it, Advent will be a privileged time to open ourselves to that experience and that joy: **the joy of a God who is coming**. A God whose dynamics is to be ever closer.

Let us live this Advent season open to the joy of the awaited coming of the Savior. God "does not know monotony" nor "repeats". Therefore, our preparation for the Solemnity of Christmas must be far from a monotonous spirit or deaf to the reality that surrounds us. Our Blessed Mother will help us to make our arms a manger for the Lord, while embracing our brothers and sisters.

With sisterly love and my prayer,

Handwritten signature of Sr. Mª Asunción González, O.P.

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Prioress General