



Advent Message from the General Council

This year we are sending an Advent message to the Society to accompany the discernment process in which we are all involved. In one week we will begin the assembly of provincials. It is not by chance that it will take place during the Advent season. We want to live this significant liturgical time as one body in the whole Society.

During this Advent time we invite the whole Society to contemplate Mary and Elizabeth, two women of faith who freely cooperated in God's plan to change the face of history by birthing a prophet, John, and Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus. Mary and Elizabeth carried life, tenderly and courageously sharing this life with each other, amidst their own fears and uncertainty. They nurtured the gift that God gave to each of them and stood together walking into an unknown future with joy and passion.

In Advent, we wait with all God's people for the coming of Jesus in this moment in history, in this world in which we try to live the gospel, among our neighbors, friends and community members who share our longings for a more just and peaceful world. Advent challenges us with the mystery of God present among us, salvation already accomplished and, at the same time, waiting and searching for a future to unfold the next chapter of salvation history.

We wait together and are invited to enter into a dialogue with Mary and Elizabeth, to join their meeting and conversation. We too, the women of the Society, are in the process of giving birth to something new for the sake of the mission, our part of God's plan. We experience the fear of the unknown, the potential of miscarriage, the mystery of how this all fits together in God's project for humanity, lived on the ground in the places where we give and receive life. Like Mary and Elizabeth, we ponder what God is proclaiming to us, asking ourselves what are we called to announce today. What is the Magnificat that we proclaim?

We invite you to explore together this encounter and share your discoveries, perhaps around a candle or a table or sitting together on the floor of our chapel. Mary listening and responding. Mary travelling beyond the borders of her home to encounter Elizabeth. Elizabeth sharing her own surprise of carrying new life in old age and rejoicing in the life within Mary. Believing, proclaiming, trusting.

May this Advent give us the time and the space to listen to the Spirit speaking through Mary and Elizabeth as they accompany each other and us on this journey towards new life.