



Message for Advent

30 November 2025

His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to you in anticipation of the upcoming **season of Advent**, a blessed time of waiting, expectation, and preparation for the coming of Christ and for the annual celebration of his Birth. As Pilgrims of Hope our Advent observances recall and solidify our hope in the loving mercy of God and in his abiding presence in our lives and in the life of the Church. We prayerfully recognize that Christ's coming - to Bethlehem, in the Eucharist, and at the end of time in glory - fulfills the deepest human desire for reconciliation (cf. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Adventu Domini*, Sermo V). To experience Advent during the Jubilee Holy Year is to allow the mystery of God's mercy to shape our waiting, so that we prepare not just for Christmas day and its beautiful celebrations and festivities, but for the fullness of life that Christ brings both now and at the end of time.

The Advent cry of the prophets - "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down" (*Is* 64:1) - expresses our longing for liberation and peace. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us: "When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming" (CCC 524). Similarly, our Jubilee observances also call for renewal and restoration, where debts are forgiven, prisoners are freed, and relationships are restored (cf. *Lev* 25:8-17). During this Holy Year, our longing becomes a lived experience, as we engage in spiritual works and works of charity, justice and mercy, symbolizing the passage from sin to grace, from fear to trust, from self-enclosure to communion with God and neighbour.



Each candle on the Advent wreath marks not only the weeks before Christmas but the stages of salvation history, thereby reminding us of the sacredness of time within God's plan. With the passage of time, we are called to cultivate hope, faith, joy in our hearts, to consider anew how we live as we engage in the jubilee practices of sacramental confession, holy communion, pilgrimage, prayer, and assistance to the needy. During this Year of the Lord's favour, our Advent waiting becomes active discipleship where our faith and hope are not just "informative" but "performative" as Pope Benedict XVI wrote a number of years ago (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 2).

Dear friends, as we mark the beginning of the new liturgical year, we cannot help but reflect on the passage of time and indeed on the fullness of time (cf. *Gal* 4:1-8). As we look forward to the fullness of God's promise, I invite you to take this sacred time to (i) rediscover the freshness of the Gospel by dedicating a few minutes each day in prayerfully reading a passage or two of the Word of God; (ii) let us be courageous and let go of any resentment we harbor towards others; (iii) let us be men and women of communion and forgiveness, always ready and active in bringing about unity among us, in our relationships, home and community. In doing so, we will note that our heart is opening more and more and making room for Christ to dwell therein. In this holy season of Advent, the Church waits not only for the birth of the Child Jesus in Bethlehem but for the rebirth of the human heart today - a true jubilee of grace, where hope becomes joy and waiting becomes mission. Wishing you all a blessed Advent season guided and accompanied by the powerful and maternal mediation of Our Lady of Advent.