



PASTORAL LETTER
BY THE BISHOP OF
GIBRALTAR

TO BE READ ON THE
FIRST SUNDAY OF
ADVENT 2019

**COME, LET US WALK IN
THE LIGHT OF THE LORD
(Isaiah 2:5)**

My dear brothers and
sisters in Christ,

Advent is a time of
expectant waiting and of

preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and of the Second Coming of Christ.

The Church therefore, invites is to share in the ancient longing of the coming of the Christ, and to contemplate the mystery of God taking on our fragile human condition at His conception, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

For such reasons, the Advent readings recall the despair of the People of Israel and God's promise of salvation and peace for His beloved people.

We, who are the People of God, also yearn as much as the People of Israel for God's peace and for His full salvation in our lives. Thus, amid our own experiences of strife and hardship in this earthly

pilgrimage, we, God's sons and daughters, who have been bought by the Blood of Christ, continue to look forward to the eternal and beatific communion with God.

However, to enter more fully into our own share for the longing of the Christ and the preparation of the loving memory of the birth of the fragile Holy Child, we are made sharers

already, here and now, in the life and communion of Christ. We do this not just by our worship of Him, but also through our love, care and appreciation for the sacred dignity of every child, born or unborn; by empathy too, for all who are weak or poor; for those who don't have a home or are persecuted; for all who flee from their own land for the sake of their lives or want of a dignified life.

Advent and Christmas draw us into the wonder of God's salvation made possible through the very incarnation of God the Son. Announced by the prophets of old, He took our human condition at conception and days after, was recognized by John the Baptist, while John also was in the womb of his own mother Elizabeth. Born into this world, poor, fragile and

persecuted, Jesus was carried in the womb of Mary His mother for nine months with love beyond all telling.

To help us in the preparation and contemplation of the wonder of the coming of Christ and of His birth, may we keep our thoughts focused on His Incarnation through increased prayer, acts of penitential love,

corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and also, very importantly, through the keeping of prayer at home as a family, in the presence of a nativity scene or crib, which so much represent, in visible form, the wonder of the saving incarnation and birth of our Lord, the Prince of Peace and Saviour of the entire Human Race.

With the assurance of my
prayer and a blessing on
you all.

Given on the 30th
November 2019, feast of St
Andrew the Apostle.

+Carmel Zammit
Bishop of Gibraltar