



CELEBRATING ADVENT IN COMMUNITY

InS Operational Team
November, 2025

LITURGIES AND DEVOTIONALS

Advent Notebook 2025



EST

InS

Instituto Sustentabilidade
América Latina
e Caribe

Presentation

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are approaching the end of 2025, a year full of surprises, lessons, and above all, God's presence in our lives. In the midst of so many events, we once again discovered that we do not walk alone: the Lord has been with us in every victory and also in every tear.

Now, as we look toward 2026, we are invited to carry with us everything we have learned this year. What has remained in our hearts? What signs of hope did we see in the midst of difficulties? And how can we enter the new year with more faith, more courage, and more love?

The season of Advent helps us with exactly that: preparing our hearts to welcome Christ who comes, not only at Christmas, but in every moment of our lives. It is a time to renew our trust in God, to strengthen our community, and to rediscover the beauty of shared faith.

With this purpose, the Latin America and Caribbean Sustainability Institute has prepared the 2025 Advent Devotional Booklet. More than just pages to be read, it is an invitation to a spiritual journey that draws us closer to God

and to one another. May each gathering be an opportunity for prayer, sharing, and renewal of hope.

May this Advent be a time of light and transformation for all of us. May Christ lead us into 2026, filled with peace, faith, and living hope!

InS Operational Team

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Instructions

It is possible to hold the meetings in the church itself or in the homes of members who are willing to open their homes to celebrate the meetings. The family that welcomes the community into their home should have the space prepared before the meeting. If the meeting is held in the church, arrange the chairs in a circle so that everyone can look towards the center where the Advent wreath will be placed.

Advent gatherings include some special rituals, such as lighting the candles of the Advent wreath. The Advent wreath consists of a circle of cypress or green branches with four violet or purple candles, decorated with red ribbons. If the meetings take place in the church, the wreath is placed in a prominent location. If the meetings are held in homes, the Advent wreath should be made inside a plate or tray so that it can be taken to the other homes at each meeting.

The liturgical color of the Advent period is purple, violet or lilac. This color is associated with penance, hope, sadness and nostalgia. It signals that something is coming. It calls for reflection and prayer. In each meeting, one candle should be lit at a time, that is, in the first meeting, one candle is lit, in the

second, two candles are lit and so on. The moment of lighting the candles will be included in the liturgy of each meeting.

To make an Advent wreath you can watch some instructional videos on YouTube. Below we suggest some links to watch the videos.

Materials needed for the Advent wreath:

- Something circular (this could be cardboard, a firm circular frame, like a large ring)
- Green cypress branches
- Four purple or violet candles
- Favorite decoration (can be Christmas tree baubles or red bows)

Some links to instructional videos for making an Advent wreath:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzbLs3ocqMo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcOuxO7Tuy4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k39q7shhQN0>

Suggested materials for the meetings:

- The Advent wreath
- Bible
- Cross

- Natural flowers or leaves
- Violet, purple, or lilac fabric

The devotional liturgy contains several moments that can be divided and read by all participants. Everything written in parentheses () should not be read aloud; they are merely indications and guidelines for specific moments. It is important to have the community's songbook on hand when singing, since this Advent resource does not suggest specific hymns so that each community can sing the songs they know best.

We hope you have a blessed encounter.

1st Advent Devotional

Initial instructions

Set up the Advent wreath in a place where everyone can see it. In the same way, set up a purple or lilac cloth with flowers, a Bible, and a cross in the room. Also have a lighter or matches to light the candle. Keep everything organized so that everyone feels comfortable.

Divide the parts of the devotional among the people present at the meeting, each person can read a part. What is in italics in parentheses should not be read aloud, it is just a momentary instruction. When the time comes to begin, invite people to observe a moment of silence and begin the liturgy.

Greeting and welcome – *(Someone who welcomes, it could be the family that welcomes you into the house or someone who leads the group. Light a candle from the Advent wreath:)*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, welcome to this first Advent gathering. We begin a journey of faith and watchfulness, in which the light of God's promise begins to shine upon us.

This is a sacred season of waiting and preparation, when faith is strengthened, hope blossoms, and love is renewed in our lives. On this path of preparation for Christmas, let us allow the psalmist's plea to echo in our hearts: "Show us your unfailing love, Lord, and grant us your salvation." (Ps 85:7)

May this prayer also be ours as we begin together this Advent journey, trusting that God comes to meet us with love and mercy.

Let us be enlightened by the presence of the Lord, who gathers us today as a community of faith and hope! In the presence of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I invite you to joyfully sing the following hymn:

♪ Hymn ♪

Psalm Reading – Psalm 25:1-10

Confession of sins and announcement of grace – God of mercy and salvation, gathered in this season of Advent, we come before You with humility to confess our sins. Forgive us, Lord, for the failures of our daily lives, for the thoughts and

attitudes that wound our brothers and sisters. Forgive us for the prejudice that closes eyes and hearts, for our neglect of Your creation, and for the evil we sometimes allow to dwell within us. Forgive us, O God, for the times we mistreated minorities and ignored the pain of our neighbor. Have compassion on us and renew hope within our hearts. Show us Your mercy, Lord, and grant us Your salvation, so that we may walk in peace, justice, and love, prepared for the coming of Your Son. Amen.

Hear now the good news of God's Word: "Show us your unfailing love, Lord, and grant us your salvation." (Ps 85:7) In Christ, this plea finds its answer. God does not deal with us according to our sins but welcomes us with love and compassion. Through the cross and the resurrection of the Son, mercy has triumphed and salvation has come to dwell among us. Therefore, receive and live this truth: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven and renewed for a life of faith, hope, and love. Amen. Let us sing:

♪Hymn ♪

Gospel Reading – Luke 21:25-36

Message – This year’s Advent does not begin with the familiar and welcoming scene of Jesus’ birth. Instead, the Gospel presents us with images of chaos, crisis, and disorder. At first glance, this choice may seem strange, but it reveals profound wisdom: before contemplating God who comes as a child, we are called to recognize that He is also the God who transforms what is wounded and deteriorated.

In the Gospel of Luke, the signs in the heavens and on earth are not meant to generate fear. On the contrary, they seek to awaken active hope. The use of symbolic images announces that injustice is not permanent and that God intervenes in history to renew life. It is in this context that Jesus calls us: “Stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near” (Luke 21:28).

Lifting up the head is a profoundly spiritual gesture. It is refusing to live bent down by fear, anguish, or indifference. It is to assume a posture of dignity, courage, and trust, even when reality seems unstable. The chaos described by Jesus can be compared to the tensions and conflicts—internal, external, personal, communal, and social — that so often shake our peace and make our relationships difficult.

Advent, however, invites us to another attitude: to watch, to lift up the head, and to keep hope alive. Watching, from the Christian perspective, is not living in anxious alertness, but remaining attentive to God's presence here and now. It is keeping a heart awake, sensitive to the needs of the world, able to perceive where life calls for care, justice, and reconciliation.

On this path, prayer occupies a central place. It reconnects us with God, with ourselves, and with others. Through prayer, we recover breath and sensitivity to discern paths of peace, even when crisis tries to harden the heart. Prayer returns us to the world with clarity and courage.

Advent reminds us that watching means keeping our eyes open to perceive where God is already acting. Lifting up the head is to affirm that fear does not have the last word. Keeping hope alive is to transform every gesture of care, justice, solidarity, and reconciliation into concrete signs of God's Kingdom among us.

In a reality marked by inequalities, violence, and polarization, these attitudes become even more urgent. Jesus does not call us to panic, but to courage; He does not invite us to escape, but to commitment. He reminds us that God visits

precisely the world that needs to be restored, and that we actively participate in that restoration.

Actively waiting for the Christ who comes is learning to live with heads held high, believing that redemption has already begun. It is to cross chaos with hope, trusting that God comes to meet a broken world, and that each of our gestures of justice and reconciliation is already a sign of the Kingdom.

In this Advent season, may we renew our commitment to hope and vigilance. May Jesus inspire us to lift our heads in the face of chaos, to remain attentive to God's presence in a wounded world, and to transform every act of care, justice, and solidarity into living signs of the Kingdom.

Pause for dialogue: *(At this moment, open the group dialogue using the following guiding questions:)*

- 1) Where do we perceive today Jesus' call to "lift up the head"?
- 2) In what way can prayer help us to cross chaos with hope?
- 3) What concrete gestures of care and justice can we assume together in this Advent?

(Give a few minutes and encourage community dialogue on reflection)

♪ Hymn ♪

Final Prayer – Lord our God, in this first week of Advent we open our hearts to Your presence and renew our hope. Hearing Your Word reminds us that it is time to stay awake, to be alert and firm in faith. Therefore, we ask that Your Church may be a light amid the uncertainties of the world, joyfully proclaiming the coming of Your Son. Accompany, Lord, the rulers and leaders of the nations, that they may act with wisdom and always seek peace, justice, and the common good. Strengthen each of us so that, amid life’s worries, we do not lose sight of You. May Your Spirit help us to recognize Your presence in simple acts of love and to walk with confidence until the day when Your light transforms the whole earth. Keep our hope alive and teach us to wait with joy for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We place our other thanks and supplications in the prayer that Jesus himself taught us, saying: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and

deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing and sending – *(The person leading the reading of the blessing and the sending forth extends his or her hands forward, palms down. The other people receiving the blessing extend their hands forward, palms up.)*

We extend our hands to receive God's blessing:

“May the Lord show us His mercy and grant us His salvation. May faith be strengthened, hope blossom, and love be renewed in our lives. And may the light of Christ accompany us in this Advent and forever. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.” *(Blow out the candle).*

Notices – *(Inform the location of the next meeting, the time and make the necessary distributions.)*

2nd Advent Devotional

Initial instructions

Set up the Advent wreath in a place where everyone can see it. In the same way, set up a purple or lilac cloth with flowers, a Bible, and a cross in the room. Also have a lighter or matches to light the candle. Keep everything organized so that everyone feels comfortable.

Divide the parts of the devotional among the people present at the meeting, each person can read a part. What is in italics in parentheses should not be read aloud, it is just a momentary instruction. When the time comes to begin, invite people to observe a moment of silence and begin the liturgical moment.

Greeting and welcome – *(Someone who welcomes, it could be the family that welcomes you into the house or someone who leads the group. Light two candles on the Advent wreath:)*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in this second Advent meeting, we are invited to open paths in the desert of life, preparing our hearts for the coming of the Lord.

With each candle lit, hope grows; with each prayer, faith is strengthened; with each act of love, the Kingdom of God is revealed. May this celebration be a time of light and renewal. The Gospel reminds us of the words of the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. And all people will see God’s salvation.’” (Lk 3:4,6)

Let us be guided by the promise of Christ who comes, bringing peace, justice, and new life. In the presence of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with joy, let us sing the first hymn:

♪ Hymn ♪

Psalm Reading – Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Confession of sins and announcement of grace – God of life and hope, in this season of Advent we are called to prepare the way for Your coming. Yet we confess that so often we have walked along crooked paths. We confess, Lord, our pride and our indifference before the pain of others. Forgive us for the injustice we nurture in silence and for the comfort that keeps

us from striving for a more just world. Forgive us when we close our ears to Your voice and let discouragement or haste pull us away from prayer. Forgive us for failing to straighten the paths of reconciliation and peace in our daily relationships. Lord, have mercy on us. Align our lives with Your will and open in us space for the birth of hope. Lead us in the hope of Your salvation, revealed to all humanity in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Hear the good news of the Word: “And all people will see God’s salvation.” (Lk 3:6) This promise is fulfilled in Christ, who came into the world to transform lives and restore paths. On the cross, He removed the weight of guilt; in the resurrection, He opened for us the way of hope. Therefore, receive with joy: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven, reconciled, and called to walk in newness of life. Amen. Let us sing:

♪ Hymn ♪

Gospel Reading – Luke 3:1-6

Message – The Gospel of this second Sunday of Advent presents us with John the Baptist, the prophet sent to prepare

the way of the Lord. Luke begins by recalling the names of emperors, governors, kings, and high priests—people who occupied the center of political and religious power. But after this grand list, the evangelist surprises us: the Word of God was not addressed to palaces or great temples; it came to John, in the desert.

This choice says a lot about how God acts. He does not reveal himself first in spaces of ostentation, but in simplicity. He does not speak first to the powerful, but to the humble. The desert, in the Bible, is a place of truth. There, there are no distractions or illusions; there, people recognize themselves as they are and open themselves to hear the voice of God. The desert also symbolizes the peripheries of life, where many people face hardships, yet their hearts remain more open to grace.

It was in this setting that John the Baptist began his mission, traveling throughout the region of the Jordan and proclaiming: “Repent and prepare the way of the Lord.”

John’s call was not only moral; it was an invitation to change the way of thinking and living. He called the people to face a reality marked by disorder and injustice, reminding them that the transformation of society begins with the

conversion of each person. To convert means to recognize what needs to be changed and to commit to living in a new way.

Preparing the way of the Lord means removing the obstacles that prevent peace from flourishing and hinder our encounter with God — pride, grudges, lack of dialogue, prejudice, injustice, inequality, exclusion, and silence. Where these barriers remain, peace cannot flourish.

The Gospel ends with a consoling promise: “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Salvation is for all people. The Word of God has no expiration date and is not limited; it is addressed to every human being who longs for dignity and a full life.

May this Advent season renew in us the willingness to prepare our hearts to welcome the Lord who is coming. May we straighten our paths, tear down barriers, and make room for God’s peace in our families, in our community, and in the world.

Pause for dialogue: *(At this moment, open the group dialogue using the following guiding questions:)*

- 1) What obstacles do we need to overcome to experience more of God's peace?
- 2) How can we prepare paths of peace and justice around us, inspired by the example of John the Baptist?
- 3) Where, in our daily lives or in society, can we recognize "deserts" or peripheries where God is calling us to act?

(Give a few minutes and encourage community dialogue on reflection)

♪ Hymn ♪

Closing Prayer – Lord our God, in this second week of Advent we want to prepare our hearts for Your coming, remembering the call of John the Baptist to make straight the paths and open space for Your grace. We know that by our own strength we cannot purify ourselves or make ourselves worthy, but we trust in Your mercy that reaches us first. We ask You, Lord, that Your Church may boldly proclaim repentance and forgiveness, showing the world that salvation is a free gift of Your love. Bless those who preach and serve in Your name, so that their words and actions may prepare hearts to welcome Christ. Remember also those who suffer, those who live under

injustice, in war, and in loneliness. May Your presence bring comfort and hope where there is pain, and may Your Spirit renew in us the commitment to be instruments of Your peace. Lead us, Lord, by Your Spirit, into a life of sincere repentance and confident faith. May our words and actions prepare the way for Your Kingdom and reveal Your love to those who walk beside us. Teach us to wait with humility and joy for the One who comes to renew all things: Jesus Christ, our Lord. All this, and much more, we place in the prayer that Jesus Christ has taught us, saying: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing and sending – *(The person leading the reading of the blessing and the sending forth extends his or her hands forward, palms down. The other people receiving the blessing extend their hands forward, palms up.)*

We extend our hands to receive God's blessing:

“May the Lord help us prepare the pathways of our hearts for His coming. May His voice resound in our lives, awakening faith, courage, and hope. And may the promise of salvation be with us today and always. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.” *(Blow out the candles)*

Announcements – *(Announce the location of the next meeting, the time and make the necessary distributions.)*

3rd Advent Devotional

Initial instructions

Prepare the space with the Advent wreath in a place where everyone can see it. In the same way, prepare a purple or lilac cloth with flowers, the Bible and the cross in this space. Also have a lighter or matches to light the candle. Leave everything organized so that everyone feels comfortable.

Divide the parts of the devotional among the people present at the meeting, each person can read a part. What is in italics in parentheses should not be read aloud, it is just a momentary instruction. When the time comes to begin, invite people to observe a moment of silence and begin the liturgical moment.

Greeting and welcome – *(Someone who welcomes, it could be the family hosting in their home or someone leading the group. Light three candles on the Advent wreath:)*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, on this third gathering of Advent we are invited to walk in hope and in joy, for the light of the Lord is already rising on our horizon.

The Scriptures remind us of the mission of John the Baptist, the messenger sent by God: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” (Mt 11:10)

Just as John prepared the hearts of the people to receive the Savior, we too are called to prepare our paths: straighter with faith, stronger with justice, and wider with love.

May this celebration strengthen us and renew our hope in Christ who comes. In the presence of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with joy, let us sing the first hymn:

♪ Hymn ♪

Psalm Reading – Psalm 145:5-10

Confession of sins and announcement of grace – Faithful and compassionate God, in this season of Advent You remind us of the mission to prepare the way of the Lord, as John the Baptist did. Yet we confess that so often we have silenced Your voice within us. Forgive us, Lord, when we fail to be witnesses of Your love in word and deed. Forgive us for our lack of courage

in the face of injustice and for the fear that keeps us from proclaiming the truth of the Gospel. Forgive us when we choose comfort over service, and when our witness becomes weak before the world. Forgive us, for too often we close the doors of our hearts instead of opening paths of reconciliation and hope. Lord, have mercy on us. Renew in us the spirit of the messenger who proclaims Your coming, and strengthen in our hearts the hope that never fades. Prepare us, O God, to be living signs of Your presence among us. Amen.

Hear the good news of the Word: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” (Mt 11:10) In Christ, this promise is fulfilled. He is the Good News who came to dwell among us, bringing forgiveness, peace, and new life. On the cross, He opened for us the way of reconciliation; in the resurrection, He confirmed the victory of hope. Therefore, receive in faith: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven, renewed, and sent forth as witnesses of His Kingdom. Amen. Let us sing:

♪ Hymn ♪

Gospel Reading – Luke 3:7-18

Message – After presenting John the Baptist in the desert as the one who calls us to conversion and to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord last week, the Gospel proposed for this third Sunday of Advent deepens his teaching.

When the crowds approach and ask, “What should we do?” John does not respond with empty words or complex rituals. He points out concrete paths of transformation: sharing what we have with those in need, acting honestly, not exploiting anyone, and fulfilling our responsibilities ethically. Faith, John teaches us, is not measured by appearances or formalities, but by the fruits it produces: justice, solidarity, and love.

Advent is not only a time of waiting or inner devotion; it is also a time of concrete action. Every gesture of sharing, every act of care for those who suffer, every initiative that promotes reconciliation and peace is a path we prepare for the coming of Christ. Just as John cried out in the desert, today we are called to cry out in our own “deserts”: places of violence, indifference, and division.

John’s preaching reminds us that no one is excluded. Both humble people and those in positions of power receive instructions to act with justice and integrity. This challenges us

to reflect: how do we use our power, resources, and influence? Are we promoting life, peace, and justice, or feeding inequality and indifference?

John announces the baptism of repentance, but points to Jesus, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire, transforming lives. Advent invites us to this integral transformation: conversion is not only words or feelings, but concrete action. It is trusting, but also sharing bread, defending justice, caring for those nearby, and building bridges where there are walls.

In this time of waiting and active hope, true joy comes from merciful hearts. Preparing the way of the Lord means lighting lights of hope and compassion, making God's love visible even amid the darkness of war, violence, and indifference. Every act of justice and solidarity is resistance against darkness and a proclamation that Christ is coming, bringing peace and reconciliation.

May our faith be manifested in fruits of justice, love, and peace. May our hearts become fertile to welcome Christ, and our hands open to serve.

Pause for dialogue: *(At this moment, open the group dialogue using the following guiding questions:)*

1) What concrete actions can we take today to bear fruits of justice and peace?

2) How can we use our resources, time, and influence to promote life and solidarity, rather than indifference or inequality?

3) What “walls” do we need to break down in our lives or communities to make way for compassion and reconciliation?

(Give a few minutes and encourage community dialogue on reflection)

Hymn

Final prayer – Lord our God, in this third week of Advent we are reminded, by the voice of John the Baptist, that true faith bears fruits of repentance and love. Before Your Word, we recognize that many times we have lived with indifference, forgetting Your will and the needs of our neighbor. Yet we trust in Your grace that calls, forgives, and transforms us. We ask You, Lord, that Your Church remain faithful to the Gospel and, moved by Your Spirit, boldly proclaim the justice and

compassion that come from You. May we not seek only beautiful words, but a faith that becomes concrete actions of sharing, solidarity, and care for those who suffer. Bless those who exercise leadership in our communities and in the world, so that they may act with honesty, humility, and commitment to life. Strengthen those who are weary, those who face pain, grief, or loneliness, so that they may find in You comfort and hope. Lord, purify our hearts from all arrogance and indifference. May Your Holy Spirit renew us, so that we may be living signs of Your presence in the world. Teach us to live with joy the good news of salvation and to wait in faith for Your Kingdom, which has already begun among us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. With humility and faith, we unite our voices in the prayer that Your Son, Jesus Christ, taught us, saying: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing and sending – *(The person leading the reading of the blessing and the sending forth extends his or her hands forward, palms down. The other people receiving the blessing extend their hands forward, palms up.)*

We extend our hands to receive God's blessing:

“May the Lord send us forth as messengers of His peace. May our words and actions prepare the way for His presence. And may the joy of Advent fill our hearts with new life. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.” *(Blow out the candles)*

Announcements – *(Announce the location of the next meeting, the time and make the necessary distributions. One suggestion for the community is regarding the next and last meeting, the invitation is to be able to have a beautiful banquet or a sharing with meals made by each of the participants. It would be a space where they could bring the food to the meeting place and have a moment of agape. For this, it would be important to be able to distribute and organize the people who can and want to bring: food, drinks, napkins, glasses, cutlery, etc.)*

4th Advent Devotional

Initial instructions

Prepare the space with the Advent wreath in a place where everyone can see it. In the same way, prepare a purple or lilac cloth with flowers, the Bible and the cross in this space. Also have a lighter or matches to light the candle. Leave everything organized so that everyone feels comfortable.

Divide the parts of the devotional among the people present at the meeting, each person can read a part. What is in italics in parentheses should not be read aloud, it is just a momentary instruction. When the time comes to begin, invite people to observe a moment of silence and begin the liturgical moment. Finally, remember that at the end there will be a moment of sharing, where each person should have brought what was previously assigned.

Greeting and welcome – *(Someone who welcomes, it can be the family welcoming the group into their home or someone who leads the group. Light the four candles of the Advent wreath:)*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in this fourth gathering of Advent our waiting is filled with joy, for God's promise is about to be fulfilled.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us of the great news: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). (Mt 1:23)

Emmanuel is the sign of divine love made present in history, walking with us at every step. He is the light that scatters the darkness, the peace that overcomes sorrow, the new life born among us.

May this celebration rekindle in our hearts faith and hope, preparing us to welcome Christ who comes. In the presence of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with gratitude and joy, let us sing the first hymn:

♪ Hymn ♪

Psalm Reading – Psalm 80:1-7

Confession of sins and announcement of grace – God of love and promise, as we draw near to Christmas we remember the great mystery of the incarnation: You come to dwell among us.

Yet we confess, Lord, that so often we fail to recognize Your presence in our midst. Forgive us when we let fear and lack of faith take hold of us. Forgive us for the ingratitude that dims the joy of life and for the hardness of heart that keeps us from welcoming our neighbor. Forgive us when we reduce Christmas to mere celebrations and forget the true gift: Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. Forgive us when we do not see Your presence in the most fragile people and in moments of suffering. Lord, have mercy on us. Let the certainty of Your presence be born anew in our hearts, and fill our lives with the hope Emmanuel brings to the world. Amen.

Hear the good news of the Word: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (Mt 1:23) This promise is fulfilled in the birth of Christ, the Savior. In Him, God does not remain distant but comes to dwell among us, bringing forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life. Therefore, receive and live this truth: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven, renewed, and strengthened by the presence of God in our journey. Amen. Let us sing:

♪ Hymn ♪

Gospel Reading – Luke 1:47-55

Message - Today we reach the last Sunday of Advent, and with it, we almost complete our time of preparation to welcome Christ who is coming. The Gospel of Luke for today presents us with Mary's song, the Magnificat, and in it we find one of the most profound and transformative expressions of the Christian faith.

Mary does not sing only as a mother awaiting her child. She proclaims God's concrete action in the world: a God who does not remain distant, but intervenes in history, taking the side of life and human dignity. She shows us that God's peace is not passive, it is not the absence of conflict, nor merely an inner feeling, but justice in action.

In the Magnificat, Mary says that God overthrows unjust systems, lifts up the humble, fills the hungry, lifts the forgotten, and brings down those in power who oppress. These words sound like a true spiritual and social manifesto. Mary sings in the context of her poverty, her marginalization, under Roman rule, and yet she sings with confidence and hope. Her "yes" is a radical act of faith: she surrenders to God's mission, trusting that He transforms reality.

Advent reminds us that our waiting should not be passive. Waiting is preparing to act; it is being attentive to God's presence that transforms lives and societies. And, like Mary, we are called to recognize that God often acts where we least expect: in weakness, in suffering, in pain. This is the theology of the cross in action, reminding us that God stands in solidarity with those who suffer.

In Latin America, this message resonates deeply. Our history is marked by inequality, structural violence, poverty, and exclusion. The Magnificat is a call for each of us to participate in this transformation, just like Mary: denouncing what destroys life, defending those who suffer, strengthening initiatives of justice, and walking alongside the small and marginalized, ensuring a dignified and just life, just as Christ did.

During this Advent season, may we renew our "yes" to God. May we be inspired by Mary to trust, even when we do not understand everything; to sing, even in the midst of darkness; and to act, even when reality seems adverse.

May the peace Mary announces, the peace that transforms reality, strengthen us to live a faith that trusts,

resists, and transforms, making us instruments of God's Kingdom here and now.

Pause for dialogue: *(At this moment, open the group dialogue using the following guiding questions:)*

- 1) In our daily lives, how can we “overthrow unjust systems” and strengthen humble people, inspired by Mary’s Magnificat?
- 2) How can our waiting become active, transforming our choices and actions in the face of injustices and suffering around us?
- 3) What signs of hope and transformation can we be today, following Mary’s example, even amid difficulties, inequalities, and conflicts in our society?

(Give a few minutes and encourage community dialogue on reflection)

🎵 **Hymn** 🎵

Final prayer – Lord our God, in this fourth week of Advent we join our voices with Mary’s song, rejoicing in You, the God who looks with love upon the humble and fulfills His promises. Your power is revealed in mercy, and Your greatness is shown in the

care for those who suffer. For this we praise You, for You are faithful through all generations and Your love never fails. We ask You, Lord, that Mary's example inspire us to live with faith and trust, even when the paths ahead seem uncertain. May Your Church proclaim with joy the Gospel of grace, reminding the world that You lift up the lowly and fill with good things those who hunger for justice and for peace. Bless, Lord, all people and families who await a new beginning, expectant mothers, homes preparing to welcome life, and all who wait with hope for Your liberating presence. Comfort those who are sad, feed those in need, and renew in every heart the assurance that You are near. Lord, make us instruments of Your love and messengers of Your joy. May we, like Mary, trust in Your Word and serve with humility, so that Your Kingdom of justice and peace may blossom among us. We pray in Your name, with the prayer that Christ Himself taught us: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing and sending – *(The person leading the reading of the blessing and sending it forth extends his or her hands forward, palms down. The other people receiving the blessing extend their hands forward, palms up.)*

We extend our hands to receive God's blessing:

“May Emmanuel, God with us, remain by our side in every step of life. May His light overcome the darkness, His peace sustain our journey, and His love prepare us to welcome Christmas with joy. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.” *(Blow out the candles)*




Closing – *(In this last moment of the devotional, the sharing moment begins with the meals brought by the members. In the same way, talk about how the experience with the devotionals was, how you felt in preparing for Christmas and thus be able to share experiences and meals in this closing moment.)*



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