

# Go For<sup>th</sup>...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

## MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

# REMEMBER THE REASON



### SUNDAY READINGS:

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:37-44

### MISSION COMMENTARY

Are you asking yourself, "Where has the year gone by?" "It seems like only yesterday we were enjoying the warm and sunny days of July and August!" I join you with these thoughts and as I do, I realize that Advent is, indeed, a much needed time for reflection and stopping the hasty movement ahead that seems to take over us.

It seems that the living of mission is always present in my thoughts and life. My mission is very special during this time of Advent. Not only am I called to slow down, to give more time for prayer and entering deeply into the preparation for the coming of Jesus as a child, but to invite others to do the same. My Franciscan spirituality has helped me to understand the great mystery of the Incarnation.

I stand in awe of the love of God when I ponder on the love that sent his only Son so that we may become children of God and heirs of eternity. I stand in awe when I ponder on Jesus who did not grasp onto his divinity but became a man, a human being like us in everything but sin. The mission of Jesus was to manifest the love of the Father so that we could try to comprehend this love and then live this love, sharing it with all people. We just celebrated the feast of Christ the

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King and we embrace the type of King that Jesus was and not the type that we frequently see today. As St. Francis would say, the King of the poor, the forgotten, the marginalized, the King of lepers.

It is more common now to find statues of Mary, our blessed Mother, pregnant with the child that had to be a mystery to her. She, without understanding, embraced the mystery and with faith journeyed ahead knowing that God would always be near her. She stayed awake. She believed. She brought others into this journey of faith and action without counting the cost. I enjoy talking with her and asking every year at this time: "Did you ever repent of saying your Yes to the angel?"

And so we begin this journey of four weeks in preparation for Christmas day. We will see many lights in the darkness, especially on the houses and buildings. Let us pray that we will remember why the lights are there and to whom they are leading us. We will see many crib scenes in churches, in homes and on the streets. Let us remember the poverty and suffering that Mary and Joseph accepted as they awaited their son. Let us see beyond the cuteness and romanticism of the crib scenes, so that our love will grow for all.

Our God is with us! Emanuel! Love is our mission!

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## NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

**First Reading - Isaiah 2:1-5:** One of the most constant Biblical symbols is the mountain. Rising above the land of the people is where God dwells, on the highest mountain. The prophet Isaiah uses this symbol to show us that even though it is above us, it is accessible to us. We can climb the mountain and meet our God. In this new creation life will be different because relationships are different. This is a beautiful reading to end the Jubilee year as pilgrims of Hope and as we hope for a world without war and where all peoples can live a life worthy of the children of God.

**Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9:** Jerusalem was the holy city of the Jewish people in the Old and New Testament times and continues to be even today. When we meditate on this psalm we remember that Jesus has taught us that God is to be found in all cities, in all peoples. Our challenge is to be open to the presence of God in all places. We, too, pray for peace not only in Jerusalem but in the world.

**Second Reading - Romans 13:11-14:** The symbols of light and hour enhance our understanding of salvation. Paul reminds us that Jesus is the light and we need him to save us from the actions of darkness. We must be honest with ourselves as we recognize and renounce the darkness that we have allowed to creep into our lives. Come, Emmanuel, forgive us and bring us into your light!

**Gospel - Matthew 24:37-44:** Jesus' message is very clear in today's Gospel. "Stay awake!" He uses the stories to which the Jewish people of his time could relate. Although they might seem strange to us, his command to be attentive and alert are as clear as a glass of mountain water. However, sometimes we doze off; we allow ourselves to fall into the routine of each day, and before we know it, we have fallen asleep. This Advent time is conducive to the need to be alert. What can you do, I do, to keep awake during this blessed time of Advent?

Notes and Commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, OSF. Sr. Nancy is a past-president of the USCMA and currently serves in a small rural parish. She also serves her religious community on various committees. She is a spiritual director and translates for other groups in Portuguese.

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