

Advent: *A time of grace, renewal and new birth in the Good Shepherd Congregation*

> *"Advent, my dear daughters, is a time of recollection, of salvation; it is a season of grace of which we must profit."* — St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, *Conferences and Instructions*, Chapter XXII: **On Advent**

Her understanding of Advent speaks profoundly to where the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd is today. We are living through a period of transition, integration, discernment and transformation. Like Advent itself, this is a time of waiting, but also of preparing, letting go and welcoming something new.

1. Advent is a time of recollection: *Returning to our roots*

Amid the changes and challenges facing the Congregation, we are invited to pause, listen to God and rediscover the heart of our charism. We need to deepen our roots in the love and mercy of the Good Shepherd and allow the vision of St. John Eudes and St. Mary Euphrasia to guide our decisions, relationships and mission.

> ***Are we still allowing our founding spirit and charism to shape the way we live and serve today?***

2. Advent is a time of grace: *Growing into one Congregational family*

Our reunification is not simply an organizational achievement; it is an ongoing journey of communion, healing and shared identity. We are called to welcome our differences, overcome divisions, deepen mutual trust and become one heart in mission.

> ***How are we contributing to building a Congregation where communion, mutual respect and shared responsibility truly flourish?***

3. Advent is a time of preparation: *Renewing our commitment to the mission*

In a world marked by violence, human trafficking, poverty, exploitation and injustice, we are called to prepare our hearts to recognize Jesus in women, girls and children whose dignity is wounded. Like Mary, who welcomed Jesus with openness and faith, we too must welcome Christ in those who are most vulnerable and make His compassionate love visible.

> ***Are we preparing ourselves to respond courageously and compassionately to the cries of those entrusted to our care?***

4. Advent is a time of contemplation: *Reconnecting prayer with mission*

Our contemplative and apostolic lives, together with our partners-in-mission, remind us that prayer and action belong together. Our mission must flow from a deep relationship with God, while our prayer must keep us attentive to the cries of the world.

> ***Are we giving enough space to prayer and contemplation so that our mission continues to be rooted in God's love and guided by His Spirit?***

5. Advent is a time of new birth: *Becoming a Congregation of hope*

In this season of Advent, we are invited to allow something new to be born within our Congregation with renewed passion for the charism, deeper communion, courageous leadership, openness to new generations and more prophetic responses to the needs of our time. We are called not merely to preserve what we have inherited, but to give it new life and expression.

REFLECTION FOR OUR ADVENT JOURNEY

What is God inviting our Congregation to renew, let go of and bring to new birth at this moment in our history?

May we welcome this Advent as a time of grace, renewed communion and hope, allowing Christ to transform our hearts and mission.

May we move from preservation to transformation, from fear to hope, from separation to communion, and from routine to renewed missionary zeal.

Like Mary, may we be open to God's surprises; like St. Mary Euphrasia, may we respond with audacity, faith and love; and like Jesus, the Good Shepherd, may we continue to bring hope, dignity and compassion to those most in need.



This Advent season, let us prepare not only for the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, but also for His new birth in our hearts, in our Congregation and in our mission.