

**Homily: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Advent Yr B:**  
**This Advent Ask Mary to Lead Us to Jesus through the Rosary**

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At the beginning a new Church year with this First Sunday of Advent (you might have noticed the new missalettes!), the Church urges us to contemplate the two comings of Christ (recall: advent means “coming”):

His first coming, as a lowly newborn child in Bethlehem, when He comes as our universal Savior and Redeemer;

and His Second Coming, in glory, as universal King and Lord, on the Last Day – the Day of the Lord – to judge the living and the dead.

In fact, on this first Sunday of Advent the greater emphasis is on Christ’s Second Coming; we see this especially in our second reading from First Corinthians, where St. Paul exhorts us to “keep firm and irreproachable” up to “the day of the Lord Jesus Christ”;

and also in our Gospel, where Jesus exhorts us to “be watchful and alert,” be “ready”, for we do not know the day nor the hour when we must stand before our Lord in judgment.

On this First Sunday Advent, I’m going to urge everyone to go to the BV Mary during this holy season, to help us all better prepare for these two comings of her Son.

Mary is not only the Virgin Mother of God, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word became flesh in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit; she is also our spiritual Mother in the order of grace.

What does Mary do as our spiritual Mother? First I will ask: What to all mothers do concerning their children? They conceive them, give birth to them, and nourish them; then they form and educate them.

In conceiving Jesus, the Head of the Church, Christ’s Mystical Body, Mary also conceived all of us – spiritually, that is; for we, all the baptized, are members of Christ’s Body.

And, at the foot of the Cross, Mary gave birth to all of us in a spiritual manner. Jesus revealed this when He said to His Mother, “Woman, behold, thy son” – referring to the Apostle John – who represented all the future disciples of Christ; then He said to John, “Behold, thy mother.”

Just listen to the words of the Second Vatican Council, quoting the great Father and Doctor of the Church, Saint Augustine:

Mary “is clearly a mother of the members of Christ . . . since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the *birth* of believers in the church, who are members of its head [Jesus.]”

But Mary’s vocation as spiritual mother was not finished at the crucifixion of her divine Son; no, it was just beginning. After Jesus ascended into heaven, Mary nurtured the Apostles and first Christians, teaching them about Jesus and helping to form them into His likeness, according to His teachings.

And after Mary’s assumption into heaven, as the *Catechism* teaches, quoting Vatican II, “by her manifold intercession [she] continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation . . . [and] is invoked under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.”

From earliest times, the Church has always urged the faithful to have recourse to Mary.

The earliest known prayer to Mary in the Church, the *Sub Tuum Praesidium* (earliest copy – in Greek – late 3<sup>rd</sup> century) reflects this truth:

*“We fly to thy patronage or holy mother of God, despise not our prayers in our necessities, but ever deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed virgin.”*

Moreover, as I said earlier, Mary not only conceived and gave birth to us in a spiritual manner; she is active as our spiritual Mother in forming us in the likeness of her Son, Jesus.

Here again I will quote the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (found in the *Catechism*, no. 501): Now in heaven, Mary’s “spiritual motherhood

extends to all men whom Jesus came to save – the faithful in whose generation and the formation she cooperates with a mother’s love.”

Actually, the original Latin says “generation and education.” A good mother teaches her children, and Mary is the best of mothers. If we have recourse to Mary, she will teach/educate us about her Son; she will form us into the likeness of Jesus.

This is why the Rosary is such a powerful tool, because by praying it we meditate on the mysteries of the life of Jesus, calling on Mary over and over again to “pray for us, now and at of the hour of our death.”

In this holy season of Advent, let us have recourse to Mary through praying the Holy Rosary – daily – asking her to form us more and more into the likeness of Christ, her Son.

Jesus said, “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.”

Let us meditate on how the Son of God humbled himself by taking flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and living there for nine months. (1<sup>st</sup> Joyful mystery); and then humbled himself as a child by being obedient to Joseph and Mary.

Let us meditate on the meekness and humility of Jesus when He allowed Himself to be crowned with thorns, and mocked and ridiculed.

Let us ask Mary to teach us how to carry our crosses with patience each day during this Advent season, in imitation of Jesus who fell beneath the heavy cross, weighed down by our sins; and after carrying it to Calvary, was then affixed to that cross by three nails – for three long hours, agonizing in pain.

Finally, let us ask Mary to share in her joy at the Birth of Jesus, and likewise her joy at Christ’s resurrection and Ascension into heaven.

After meditating on these mysteries, let us strive to bring the joy of Christ to others in this holy season of Advent, as we prepare for the glorious Birth of our Savior!