On this First Sunday of Advent, we Christians begin a new liturgical year. We are invited to celebrate in a "progressive movement": Advent, Nativity (Christmas), and Epiphany. From this Sunday, until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (the last day of Christmas), we will celebrate for six weeks a "strong season" with the same Good News: the coming of the Lord. The three words: 'Advent,' 'Nativity' and 'Epiphany'—or coming, birth, and manifestation—underline the same message that Jesus Christ came in our history to bring us salvation.

Advent comes from the Latin word adventus, which means "coming" or "arrival." It has a clear eschatological character in its first part (from its First Sunday to December 16), which leads us to look toward the final coming of the Lord at the end of history. From December 17 until Christmas Day itself, the so-called "holy week" of Christmas, we are led to gaze at the preparation for Christ's first coming by the people around him (John the Baptist and his family; Joseph and Mary). For these reasons, Advent is the time of prayerful and joyful expectation.

From its Advent prayers, the Church developed an authentic liturgical spirituality that is centered on the coming of the Lord itself and our waiting for his coming. We can consider here three moments or ways of his coming:

- the coming of the Lord in the flesh;
- the coming of the Lord in the end of time;
- the constant presence or "coming" of the Lord in his Church and in the heart of the faithful who welcome him with love.

The waiting for Christ is a feeling that is similar to the waiting for a friend. St. John Henry Newman said in one of his homilies: "It is necessary to study closely the meaning of the word  
ultra (to keep watch or to stay awake).... We should not only believe, we should stay awake or keep watch; we should not only love, we have to be awake; it is not only necessary to obey, one has to be alert. And why should we keep watch? To welcome this great event: the coming of Christ... Keep watch with Christ... never lose sight of the past while looking towards what is to come and complete what the Lord deserves and do not forget the reason of his suffering."

Waiting is one of the characteristics of a Christian. Advent renews this characteristic in us, year after year. We wait because the Lord is "coming." But how shall we wait? The Gospel says: "Stay awake!" (Mt 24:42). Saint Paul in his letter to the Romans says: "Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day.... But put on the Lord Jesus Christ... Stay awake! The Lord is coming—in your heart, in our community, in the Church, in the world! But only those who are "awake" will "see" and experience the "salvation" brought by his "coming."

Sr. Maria Cecilia Payawal, PDDM

Pastoral Catechesis for the Year of Ecumenism, Interecigious Dialogue, and Indigenous People

Church Engagement in the World

— Fr. James H. Kroegeg, MM

Today on the First Sunday of Advent, our local Church, under the leadership of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), begins a new year in its nine-year journey to celebrating the five-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in these islands. The designated theme for this year focuses on three topics: Ecumenism, Interecigious Dialogue, and Indigenous Peoples. These three themes clearly reflect the vision of Church engagement with humanity and the wider world that emerged from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Faithful to her mission of evangelization, the Church is to 'engage' and interact with diverse people in the same manner as Christ totally shared our humanity through the mystery of the incarnation.

This profound vision is captured in the opening words of the Vatican II document on The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes): "The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." In a word, as Christ's disciples, as Church we "incarnate" ourselves in the lives of God's many peoples in the world.
THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon
[Cf. Ps 25 (24):1-3]
(Revised when there is no opening song)

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath
(May be made after the entrance song)

Today, we open a new liturgical year. Advent, which means “coming,” is a time of preparation for the Lord’s coming. May we have this disposition as we start a new stage of our pilgrimage.

P — Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its lights be a sign of Christ’s promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

(The priest sprinkles the wreath with holy water and may incense it.)

Lighting of the Advent Candle
(The first violet candle is lighted.)

P — Father, as we begin our Advent pilgrimage, we light a candle of hope. Grant us the courage to hope: hope for your presence, hope for your peace, hope for your promise.

All — Amen.

(After the candle is lighted, the celebrant begins the celebration of the Holy Mass.)

Greeting
(The sign of the cross is made here)

P — The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All — And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. (Pause)

He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 122)

R — Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

E. C. Marfori

Let us go re-joicing to the house of the Lord.

1. I rejoiced because they said to me, “We will go up to the house of the Lord.” And now we have set foot within your gates, O Jerusalem. (R)

2. Jerusalem, built as a city/ with compact unity. To it the tribes go up, / the tribes of the Lord. (R)

3. According to the decree for Israel, / to give thanks to the name of the Lord. / In it are set up judgment seats, / seats for the house of David. (R)

4. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! / May those who love you prosper! / May peace be within your walls, / prosperity in your buildings. (R)

5. Because of my brothers and friends / I will say, “Peace be within you!” / Because of the house of the Lord, our God, / I will pray for your good. (R)

Second Reading
(Rom 13:11-14)

Now that they have accepted the faith in Christ, Paul reminds believers that it is time to awake from slumber and live honorably as children of God.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we
first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.
— The Word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia [Ps 85:8] (Stand)
All — Alleluia, alleluia. Show us, Lord, your love; and grant us your salvation. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 24:37-44)
P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said to his disciples: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So, too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”
— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)
All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
(At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — At the start of the liturgical year, we feel more deeply the sense of being on a “journey to the Father.” Holding fast to Christ, let us pray for the grace of authentic conversion. Let us pray:

R — Father, hear our prayer.
C — That the Church and its leaders may see the Advent season as an acceptable time of salvation and invite all people to join the great pilgrimage to the house of the Father, we pray: (R)

C — That warring families and peoples may lay down their arms and seek peace and reconciliation, we pray: (R)

C — That those under the power of darkness may see light and abandon their lives of drunkenness, sexual excess, quarreling, and jealousy, we pray: (R)

C — That the handicapped, the sick, the hungry, and the victims of calamities and injustice may find consolation from the Lord and support from his generous people, we pray: (R)

C — That the Lord may welcome into the joy of his kingdom our departed loved ones, we pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause), we pray: (R)

P — Father, bless us during this season of Advent. Be with us always, and keep us in your loving care.

Through Christ, your Son.
All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)
P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings
P — Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface I of Advent
P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.
P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.
P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.
For he assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that, when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

**THE COMMUNION RITE**

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

[Ps 85 (84:13)]

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

**THE CONCLUDING RITES**

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

May the almighty and merciful God, by whose grace you have placed your faith in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son and yearn for his coming again, sanctify you by the radiance of Christ’s Advent and enrich you with his blessing.

All — Amen.

P — As you run the race of this present life, may he make you firm in faith, joyful in hope, and active in charity.

All — Amen.

P — So that, rejoicing now with devotion at the Redeemer’s coming in the flesh, you may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life when he comes again in majesty.

All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.

All — Thanks be to God.