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## COME! COME!

*Come* is a short word that can convey much longing. We say it to people we care about and want to have draw nearer. "Don't stay away. Please come—and soon!" *Come* is a call used throughout the Hebrew Scriptures as prophets looked ahead for the fulfillment of what has been promised: a Savior. During Advent *Come* is the dominant word and if we like to pray with a simple phrase or term that takes us quickly to God, *Come* is probably the one we'll choose.

In Exodus, we hear "The Lord said to Moses, Lo, I come to you in a dense cloud" (Ex 19:9). Jesus has not approached us in a dense cloud but in a much more mysterious manner. He makes His way to us, speaking no longer from an elevated mount, but with a voice based on our fragile human nature. His speech would have been in the Aramaic of His time--sentences spoken and understood by neighboring families in Nazareth.

Isaiah had foreseen Christ's coming and described it in a vocabulary of brilliance. "They name Him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful" (Is 9:5,6). Yes, Jesus is all that, but He willed to veil His power in weakness so we might encounter Him as one who shares our nature.

"Our Lord shall come and not be deaf to us" (Ps 50:3). Christ is never deaf to our pleading. His ears are now open to our entreaties as they were centuries ago to those who begged His help in Judea. He listens to everything we say to Him and has an answer even if we may not understand fully what He is trying to say to us. The psalmist pleads, "O Lord, when will You come to me?" (Ps 101:2) This Jesus Who is our brother hears the question "When?" and gives us His reply, "Always." Born of a Virgin Mother in a moment of time, the Eternal Son of God is now present in His Humanity in every passing instant. "Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt 28: 20).

*Come* is used in a back-and-forth conversation with the Anointed One of God. When I experience my own neediness and perhaps a sense of anxiety and loss, I hear my Saviour's voice in the comforting words of Isaiah. "Come to Me heedfully. Listen that you may have life...Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call Him while He is near." (Is 55: 3,6).

During Advent, I utter that single word *Come* to make contact with Jesus throughout the weeks, busy as they usually are. I see a world which, near me and far away, needs a Redeemer. When we pray *Come* to Jesus, we enter into a dialogue in which He responds to us with His own *Come*. "Come, you blessed of My Father," he addresses us in Matthew 25:34. And what is the basis of this special blessedness? He explains that whenever we give food to the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and prisoners, we are making a true contact with Him. "I assure you as long as you did it for one of these least, you did it for Me." (Mt 25:40).

Our brothers and sisters, whatever their distress, show the countenance of the One born in Bethlehem. He reaches out to us, touching our hands, and says, "Come and help them." Sometimes the assistance we give can be only our prayer for them. "Attend, O Lord, to the sound of my pleading" (Ps 86:6).

We who have been "baptized into Christ Jesus" (Ro 6:3) have been granted an overflowing bounty. He wants us to pass on that fullness so others may experience it. We are appointed--as were His first disciples-- to invite them to partake of the banquet spread out for them, too. Are we silent about the wonder of our Christian heritage, hesitant to knock on the door of another's life and say, "Come and see what could be yours"? "He satisfied the longing soul and filled the hungry soul with good things" (Ps 107:9).

Lord Jesus, you approach us, incarnate as a Jewish infant. Help us to find in You our Prince of Peace for a war-wracked world. Aid us to settle our differences. And remind me throughout these Advent days to pray often, "***Come, Lord Jesus. Come!***"

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