



**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
OFFICE FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299
Telephone (215) 587-3747 • commof@archphila.org • www.archphila.org

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Contact: Kenneth A. Gavin
Chief Communications Officer
215-587-3747 (*office*)

**A PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP NELSON J. PÉREZ
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SEASON OF ADVENT**

This year, perhaps more than ever, we need Christmas and its promise of hope for a suffering humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. To fully understand and be ready to accept that profound gift on Christmas day, we must prepare our minds and hearts.

If we embrace the Season of Advent fully, we will be ready for the Savior. Though our Advent experience may be far from typical this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this holy season can still be one of prayer and charity.

At the Angelus this past weekend, Pope Francis said, “Advent is a continuous call to hope: it reminds us that God is present in history to lead it to its ultimate goal and to lead us to its fullness, which is the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Soon we will rejoice in celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus in Bethlehem, remembering the words of Saint Matthew, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, ‘God is with us.’” As we direct our lives more fully toward the Lord Jesus during these days of preparation, let us pray for and encourage one another in our efforts to be people of hope.

+Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez
Archbishop of Philadelphia