

Pope Francis: Advent is a journey towards horizon of hope

Vatican City, Dec 1, 2013 / 09:09 am **(CNA/EWTN News)**.- The Pope's Sunday Angelus message for the start of Advent focused on the importance of hope during the liturgical season dedicated to preparing for Christmas.

“For the great human family it is necessary to renew always the common horizon toward which we are journeying. The horizon of hope! This is the horizon that makes a good journey,” Pope Francis said on Dec. 1 to the crowds in St. Peter's Square.

“The time of Advent that we begin again today returns us to the horizon of hope, a hope that does not disappoint because it is founded on the Word of God. A hope that does not disappoint, simply because the Lord never disappoints! He is faithful!” the Pope emphasized.

The time of Advent that the Church celebrates in preparation for Christmas, explained the Pontiff, is “a new journey of the People of God with Jesus Christ, our Shepherd, who guides us in history towards the completion of the Kingdom of God.”

“Let us rediscover the beauty of being together along the way: the Church, with her vocation and mission, and the whole of humanity, the people, the civilizations, the cultures, all together on the paths of time.”

“But on the way to where?” queried Pope Francis.

In the Old Testament, the People of God journeyed toward Jerusalem where the temple of the Lord was, “because from there, from Jerusalem, came the revelation of the face of God and His law.”

At the fullness of time, however, “revelation found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and the ‘temple of the Lord’ became God himself, the Word made flesh.”

It is the Lord himself who guides our journey, the “pilgrimage of all of the People of God; and by its light even the other peoples can walk towards the Kingdom of justice, towards the Kingdom of peace.”

“What a great day it will be, when the weapons will be dismantled in order to be transformed into instruments of work!” the Pope reflected, noting the scripture passage from the prophet Isaiah which referred to such peace.

“And this is possible! We bet on hope, on the hope of peace, and it will be possible!” he exclaimed.

“The journey is never finished,” advised Pope Francis. “Just as in each of our own lives, there is always a need to restart, to rise again, to recover a sense of the goal of one's own existence.”

Mary serves as a “model of this spiritual attitude, to this way of being and of journeying in life.”

Although she was just a “simple girl,” she “carried in her heart the hope of God,” explained the Holy Father.

“In her womb, the hope of God took flesh, became man, and made history: Jesus Christ.”

Mary's song of praise in the Magnificat “is the canticle of the People of God on the journey, and of all men and women who hope in God, in the power of his mercy.”

“Let us be guided by her, she who is mother, she is a 'mama' and knows how to lead us. Let us be guided by her in this time of waiting and active vigilance.”

Pope Francis then led the crowds in the traditional Angelus prayer and closed by greeting the various groups who had come to pray in the Square.

He took a moment to remember those who are affected by HIV and AIDS, since “today marks the World Day for the fight against HIV/ AIDS.”

“We express our closeness to the people who are affected, especially children, a closeness that is very concrete in the silent work of many missionaries and workers. We pray for everyone, also for physicians and researchers. That every sick person, without exception, may have access to the care they need.”