

**Homily – Monday of the First Week of Advent  
Mass at St. PJ's Children's Home – December 2, 2024**

At this time of the year, the days get shorter and colder. It is precisely at this time, when everything seems gloomy, that God gives us a beautiful promise: a new light is coming, a light that will make everything brighter and warmer. That light is Jesus, who comes to fill our hearts with love and hope. Advent is a special time when we prepare for the coming of Jesus, both at Christmas and into our lives every day.

Preparing for something special takes patience and care, just like when you want to grow a plant. You can't rush it or pull it up too early, or it will break. You must give it good soil, water, sunlight, and protect it from the cold. This is how we prepare our hearts for Jesus: we take time to care for them with love, kindness, and prayer.

Imagine you're making a drawing to give as a gift. You take time to choose the right colors and carefully make every line. Or think of the lights on a Christmas tree. They shine so beautifully, but they take time and effort to put up. That's how we prepare for Jesus – we spend time in prayer, sharing love with others, and waiting patiently for His light to fill us.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's promise is like a seed growing into something beautiful. The Messiah, Jesus, is like the Lord's special plant that brings hope to everyone. And today's Gospel shows us the faith of a Roman centurion, the chief of many soldiers, who believed Jesus' word could heal. He trusted completely in God's power and love.

Pope Francis tells us that given this man's troubles, *“he might have been anxious and could have demanded to be heard, making his authority felt. He could have insisted and even forced Jesus to come to his house.”* Instead, he was modest, humble, and ready to be taught; he did not raise his voice or make a fuss. *“He acted, perhaps without even being aware of it, like God himself, who is ‘meek and humble of heart’ (Mt 11:29).”*

As we journey through Advent, let us ask Our Lady of Guadalupe to help us prepare with the same faith and hope. Let us open our hearts, care for one another, and get ready for the light of Jesus to shine brightly in our lives.