

ADVENT,



the Maths TEACHER

Last Friday, as it is now customary, Pope Francis joined various officials of the Roman Curia for the first of a series of spiritual meditations on the time of Advent. The preacher is Raniero Cantalamessa, Capuchin friar, made a Cardinal only a few days ago! The meditation is on one verse taken from the Book of Psalms: “Teach us to count the days of our life, that we may gain wisdom of heart”.

Is Advent a teacher? A ‘maths teacher’?

Over the last weeks I have celebrated the funeral Mass of two very dear and faithful parishioners, husband and wife, who died only a month from each other. Our life has a direction, it points towards death, and our death is what gives direction to our life.

The first weeks of Advent, till December 16th, are like maths lessons teaching us to ‘count’ the shortness of our life, helping us to ‘add up’ in every moment of our day the certainty of the coming of the Lord, the end of time and the end of our life. Why? Not to put on a macabre or a funereal look, no; but to gain ‘wisdom of heart’, to open the horizons of our heart to a greater dimension, which on one hand puts into perspective everyday things, and at the same time makes them precious. Death kills our illusion of omnipotence and teaches us to engage with the mystery of life in its small moments.

Every maths teacher normally gives lots of homework!

The homework of Advent – given to us during this Second Week from John the Baptist - is to ‘prepare’ and to ‘convert’. That is, to train to die to ourselves every single day, to lose our life each day, to anticipate our death while we live, and so bring forward the coming of our Lord, the meeting with Life Eternal.

Christians are experts of life, lovers of life and of Eternal Life, because they know how to count, and they know how to prepare.

Oh Blessed Advent, thank you for teaching us how to count and how to prepare!



In manus.

Father Ivano