

### *Come, Come, Oh Little Child*

These words belong to a song written by Tom Cole. They remind me that someone is coming; Someone Special is coming! The time for gathering together, unified by prayer and anticipation will soon be here. The time is called Advent.

Last weekend, I met up with members of our Regional CLC for a council meeting in Toronto. It was not focused on Advent, but in closing the evaluation, I asked if they had any Advent traditions to share that related to our priorities. One suggestion came forth in that we can use this time to look for ways to bring our common mission in Hispaniola into our Advent prayer.

I followed up by surfing the net for advent activities. Nothing was unfamiliar but some of it brought back great memories. As I thought about it, I conjured some approaches that CLC communities might consider or expand upon. Perhaps we can bring information to our communities about the traditions of the Haitians during Advent as they prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth. We have a young adult pre-CLC community in Port au Prince. Maybe we could send letters or cards to them. Maybe we can exchange pictures of Advent celebrations. Maybe we can record a song and send it. Maybe we can send them some chocolate!

Then there are those CLC communities who are harnessed by their culture in the Dominican Republic and are afraid to speak out about issues in government policy that are harmful, inequitable and unjust for Haitian born non-citizens. What can we do to befriend them and earn their trust in the Lord? My elementary processing still comes up with a card and chocolates for starters!

Speaking about chocolates, to which I am unfortunately food intolerant, there are simple traditions here at home to share. Several can help us to bring one of the world CLC priorities, the family, to the awareness and lessons of patience and excitement manifest in the waiting period before the arrival of the Christ Child. Herein is the "welcome back" to Spiritual engagement time after a summer of some rest and enjoyment. We can ponder the gifts of warmth, light and new life in crops and trees and drift into an Advent of thankfulness.

Advent is a time for sharing, not just with our communities but with our families. We can share at the hearth or create our hearth in the Advent Wreath. Each week of Advent can be marked by a lighting of the Advent Candles. Enlist the children for the task.

In my family tradition there can be no Advent without the Advent Calendar. Here is a way to slow us down. Children and adults alike wait to open gently and patiently, the door of the day. What does God have in store for us today? Ah! A little piece of chocolate. How I savour even the thought! What else? Maybe an invitation to "touch the hem of His garment". (Mark 6:56 NIV)

*May Advent bring much love, healing and blessings as we await the arrival of the King!*