

first SUNDAY OF ADVENT



■ LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ... Come Lord Jesus, be our light! Guide us as we prepare to journey through Advent and welcome you at Christmas.

■ READ THE GOSPEL for the First Sunday of Advent (Cycle B) Mark 13:33–37

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.”

■ REFLECT WITH A STORY

Join Don Rojelio on his daily journey: First, walk 1 hour up a treacherous dirt road to a forest at the top of a mountain in El Salvador. Then, follow a steep, winding, 3,000-foot path. (Watch out for roots and vines!) Once you’ve made it to the coffee bushes, grab a sack and start picking the coffee fruit from the trees. Fill the 100-pound bags. Toss a full bag over your shoulder and carry it back down the mountain.

Don Rojelio is well prepared for this daily journey, but there are other, unexpected challenges to which he must be watchful and alert. Rainstorms can flood the farm and a fungus called coffee leaf rust can attack healthy leaves.

Catholic Relief Services and our partners help coffee-farming families like Don Rojelio’s prepare for unexpected disasters by providing assistance to plant additional coffee tree seedlings.

For Don Rojelio, being watchful, alert and prepared is a necessary part of his daily journey—but it is also a part of his faith. If you walk with him to the back of his land, he’ll show you an old, leaky, colorful church that the coffee farmers built themselves. Though the families have many other things to worry about, they gather at the simple church for Mass each week to prepare their hearts for the journey ahead.



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

PRAY

Jesus, help us prepare our hearts to meet you. We don’t know when you will come again, but we do know that we see you daily in the face of every person we meet, especially in the faces of those in need. Amen

REFLECT

How can you be more alert to the needs of others each day?

ACT

This week, choose some articles of clothing to donate to your local homeless shelter to help those most in need.

GIVE

Make a family commitment to support farmers like Don Rojelio by drinking ethically produced hot chocolate and coffee. Visit crsfairtrade.org.