



# Advent

## “Getting Ready”

Advent is the time that we set aside for preparing our hearts before the annual celebrations of Christ’s birth on Christmas. The Incarnation – God becoming man – is the turning point of history. Our Heavenly Father loves us so deeply that He promised to send us a Savior after the Original Sin of Adam and Eve. And He kept His promise! The Son of God was born in Bethlehem in order to give His life for us on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven, so that we “may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10) Living life to the full means having a relationship with Jesus in prayer, growing in the light of truth that Christ revealed to us, and being united with Him in the Sacraments. This is no small matter, and of course, we want to take this time during Advent to prepare – “get ready” – to receive Christ anew this Christmas.

The priest’s vestments during Advent are purple, the color of penance and sacrifice. They are a constant reminder of our need to get ready – to be cleansed and purified. How does one go about preparing? Advent is a season for stepping back from our busy

lives, taking time in stillness and solitude, to reflect more deeply on the mystery of God’s Incarnation – Jesus taking on human flesh to be among us. This can also include something like not having dessert occasionally, or turning off the TV for one night or setting aside an electronic device for an hour. Or this can include helping someone in need or visiting a person who is lonely. We offer small sacrifices so that during this season of grace we might have an open, welcoming heart with room to receive Jesus.

We will be surprised how these long-held Catholic traditions of preparing allow us to see and understand truths that may be hidden from our “human eyes.” In the silence of prayer, the Lord will give us new insights, that we may see with “spiritual eyes” and understand better the wonder of the mystery of Jesus who is our Savior. As we remember His coming as the Christ Child in Bethlehem, and know He is with us in each present moment – He who is “Emmanuel, God with us” – we also look forward to His Second Coming in glory. Intentionally remembering – preparing, pondering, praying with our hearts – is essential

because unfortunately without this we are bound to forget. Be encouraged to ask for the grace of this “remembering” and you will have a truly blessed Christmas this year!

By Ann Lankford

Please cut out the following Scripture and place it on the refrigerator where you will be reminded often that you are preparing for the coming of the Christ Child.

**“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us” (Matthew 1:23).**

