

Are you ready?

You will be asked that question many times over the next few weeks. Your answer might depend on your progress with shopping, home improvements, baking, etc.

Advent is very brief this year. Just three weeks. The scriptures warn us to *prepare*. But God's way of ordering your life is very different from what the world expects of you.

The holy season of Advent is about preparing our hearts and minds in two ways: ❶ For a joyous and prayerful celebration of the Lord's birth at Christmas; ❷ For Christ's return at end of time, or the end of your life — which could be yet today!

You may know the saying: "pray as if it all depends on God; work as if it all depends upon you."

WORSHIP & PRAYER

- ✦ **The Sundays of Advent** ~ Dec. 3, 10, 17 and 24*
 - ◆ Masses 5pm Saturday; 8:30 & 10:30am Sunday
 - * One Mass at 9:30am Dec. 24
- ✦ **The Immaculate Conception of the BV Mary**
A Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics in the U.S.
 - ◆ Mass at 6:30pm Thurs., Dec. 7 | 9am Fri., Dec. 8
- ✦ **Daily Mass**
 - ◆ 9-9:30am Tuesday and Friday in the chapel
 - ◆ 9am Wednesday in church with our school

Give your soul the gift of participating in daily Mass at a parish near you. The scriptures and the saints are exceptionally rich these seasons.
- ✦ **EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**
 - ◆ Tuesdays after 9am Mass until 8pm
 - ◆ 6:30-8 pm Wednesday, Dec. 13

THE SACRAMENT of PENANCE

He was given the name Jesus "because he will save his people from their sins." (Mt. 1:21.) Open your heart to Christ's forgiveness by humbly confessing your sins to a priest of Christ.

- ✦ **10-11am every Saturday** (except Christmas Day)
- ✦ By appointment with Fr. Chris Rouech



US Postage Stamps available for purchase & St. Nicolas will share candy after Masses Dec. 2 & 3. Compliments of the Knights of Columbus.



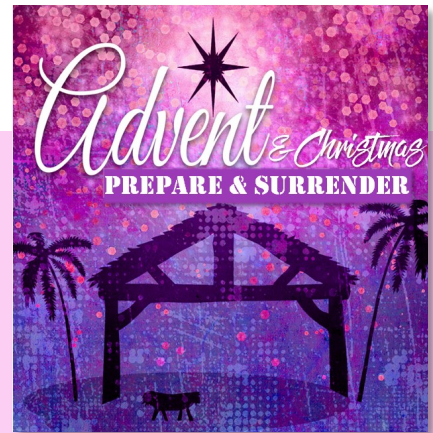
Our theme for Advent and Christmas has a similar truth; **PREPARE & SURRENDER.**

Each of us must **PREPARE** our homes and hearts for Christmas. And, each of us must humbly **SURRENDER** to the grace and the will of God in Jesus Christ whenever and however he comes.

FOR REFLECTION:

What does it mean for you to prepare and surrender?

What does "ready" mean for you?



RECONCILIATION SERVICE with EXPOSITION of the HOLY EUCHARIST

✦ 6:30pm Wednesday, Dec. 13

A Eucharistic revival is underway in the United States. Along with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the service will include an Examination of Conscience, silence, song, and priests available for confessions and absolution.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY

- ✦ **Gift Bags for Local Families in Need** — Take a tag or a bag from the Narthex "take" area Dec. 2-3. Please return your items to the "give" area of the Narthex no later than Dec. 17.
- ✦ **Women's Guild Bake Sale** to fund giving baskets
 - ◆ Dec. 9 and 10
- ✦ **Catholic Charities children and youth gifts** — Foster parents will have the opportunity to shop for the children at Catholic Charities West Michigan's "Client Christmas Store." Will you help stock the store with gifts? **Place your unwrapped gifts in the large bins in the Narthex by Dec. 10.**
- ✦ **Retirement Fund for the Religious** — A collection on the third Sunday of Advent to provide care for elderly men and women who taught in schools, served in health care, worked in parishes and served as missionaries.



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Cultivating faith and sharing its fruits

SINCE 1848



Happy New Year!



A new year of grace has begun. If you've been away, we'd love to see you at Christ's table

We are now in the **YEAR of MARK** (Year B in the Lectionary for Mass). Mark is believed to be the first evangelist to write down the Good News that had been shared orally for about 70 years after the Resurrection. This gospel plunges us into the whirlwind of Jesus' activity on earth.



Throughout the book, Jesus anticipates his own death, drawing believers to focus on this aspect of the Christian life.

Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the gospels. It does not include any description of Jesus' birth, and only brief descriptions of the Lord after his resurrection. For this reason, texts from the other gospels are used on some occasions. For four weeks this summer, we hear the "Bread of Life" discourse from John's Gospel.

