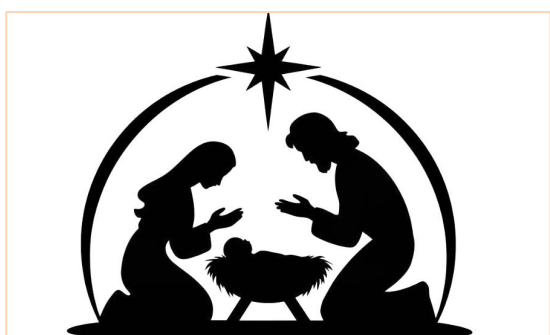


THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS

A Lord's Flock Praise & Worship Topic

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The success of every event depends largely on preparation. We are now preparing for Christmas. **Advent** is a four-week season of preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth. The name "advent" comes from the Latin word "ad venire," which means "to come." Advent is represented by four (4) candles. We have now lighted the 4th candle which represents LOVE, the ultimate love of God that He sent His only son for us. **Jesus is coming, and we are the ones eagerly waiting.** The success of our Christmas will depend on how we prepare for His coming.



HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS?

1. We must prepare for a change of heart and a change of life.

1.1. John the Baptist was sent ahead by God to prepare the way for Jesus of Nazareth. John was crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord." He is also saying this to us today.

1.2. Advent is a time for conversion. It has two parts: (1) turning away from sin and (2) turning to the Lord. Conversion is never complete if any of its two (2) components is not fulfilled.

2. We should always be ready for Jesus *second coming and third coming.*

2.1 Jesus first came 2000 years ago, incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became one of us except for sin.

2.2 We are now anticipating His second coming at the end of times to judge the living and the dead.

2.3 However, between the First and the Second Coming is a *Third Coming*. Theologians remind us that this happens before the Second Coming when a person dies and comes face-to-face with Jesus. No one

knows when and how the second and third comings will happen, but they will surely come.

2.4 Nowadays, many are so concerned with their careers; after studying for a bachelor's degree, many pursue a master's degree and then a PhD. – Doctor of Philosophy, to achieve the highest level of academic achievement in a particular field.

2.5 For Christians, **PhD**, stands for something more. It means -

- Preparation for a **Happy Death** and
 - Preparation for a **Holy Death**
- How prepared are we for a happy and holy death?

3. **We must live our lives as if Jesus is coming today, His Fourth Coming.** This happens every day in the celebration of the Holy Mass when we encounter Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist – when we *receive His body and blood in the Holy Communion*. This is the highest form of worship, prayer, and sacrifice.

4. **We must be configured into Jesus Christ.** He dwelt among us (John 1:14). He is within us, in our hearts. We must see Him in our brothers and sisters as He may come to us through them (Matthew 25:35-45). If we cannot recognize Him in them, we must question our preparations and our image of who Jesus is.

Conclusion:

The best way to celebrate Christmas is to not remove Christ in our preparations. CHRISTMAS without "Christ" and "Mass" is a meaningless celebration. For a truly meaningful advent, let us worship and adore Him in the Holy Mass.

Reflection:

1. How prepared are you for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Do you recognize Jesus in the people who come to you?
3. What are the three Christmas wishes that you want to offer to the Lord?

SCRIBES Ministry

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