

## **Enter into Advent**

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Columnist

Advent is here! It started Dec. 1, which means if you want to take Advent seriously this year, you still have time.

What is Advent you say? Well, it's a time to prepare for Jesus' coming on Christmas. Advent consists of the first four weeks before Christmas. It's a time to step back, relax, meditate, and await the coming of Christ. It's a time to reflect on our lives and who we are. A time to surrender to Him once again and place our lives into His hands.

For me, Advent teaches patience because it's so hard not to cave into the secular world of celebrating Christmas before it actually happens. Our culture makes it hard not to when every store is putting up decorations before Halloween, Christmas music is on every station, and decorations are starting to be put up.

Don't get me wrong, all these things are good; however, they make it hard to await the coming of Christ when we act like He was already born.

So why would we prepare for Christmas rather than just jump into the secular Christmas celebrations right away? Well, there's a good reason for it. When you have something important happen in your life, you usually want to prepare for it. For example, you normally don't just wake up one day and get married. No, you plan and prepare for it. It's the same with Christmas!

Christmas is such an important day for us because we are celebrating the coming of Jesus into this world. We not only celebrate it, but we are given the chance to receive Jesus into our hearts again in a very real way.

Last year was the first time I really took this seriously and, wow, let me tell you, it was worth it! At Christmas Mass, I was so overjoyed. I felt the presence of God all around me and felt Jesus in my heart in a way I have never before. It's so hard to explain, but it was the most real, most joyful Christmas I have ever encountered.

This is the reason I want to challenge you to approach this Christmas season differently. I want to challenge you to take Advent seriously so that when Christmas comes, you also can receive Him in your heart in a whole new way. Open your heart to the Lord and spend more time with Him in prayer this Advent season. The more open you are to Him, the more He can overflow your heart, soul, and mind with Himself. What is better than that? So, go for it! Meditate on His word. Enter into silence. Surrender the stress of buying gifts. Spend time with family. Enter into Jesus' life. Pray every day.

He came into this world to give you eternal life, everlasting joy, meaning to your life, and a love like no other. Let that be something to celebrate and prepare for!