

How to Prepare for Christmas

Think about it this way. We prepare for everything we consider important in life. You wouldn't show up to play in a football game and expect to win if you had not been training. You wouldn't show up unprepared to give a big presentation at work and expect to get the project. We don't expect to excel in exams if we have not studied. Consider the preparation that goes into hosting a barbecue, a dinner party, or a wedding.

Now I don't mean the typical Christmas preparations. Buying and wrapping presents. Baking cookies. Planning parties. Putting up the lights, the tree, and other decorations. I mean preparing you. When was the last time you prepared your heart for Jesus' coming at Christmas?

Looking for a simple way to start preparing your heart to receive the Jesus, this Christmas season? [Join us for Best Advent Ever.](#)

We prepare for everything we consider important in life. In every case preparation makes a wonderful experience possible. When was the last time you prepared your heart for Christmas?



Advent is a season of preparation. And if we want to experience the true magic and meaning of Christmas, we need to take a break from our to-do lists and get our hearts ready for Christmas.

The Definition of Advent

The word “advent” (the arrival of an important person or thing) is derived from the Latin word “adventus,” which means “coming.”

For Catholics, Advent is the four-week season leading up to Christmas. During Advent we anticipate the coming of Jesus. It's a time full of reflection, excitement, and hope.

About Advent

Each year the Catholic Church gives us an incredible opportunity for a powerful encounter with Jesus. In her genius, the Church invites us during Advent to take a step back and look at who we are, what we are doing, and where Jesus fits into our lives.

Jesus came into this world at that first Christmas for you, to bring meaning and deep satisfaction into your life, to fill you with lasting joy, and ultimately to bring you to eternal happiness with him in heaven. That's what we celebrate at Christmas. Are you ready?

BEST **Advent** EVER

When Does Advent Begin?

Advent officially begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on December 24. It marks the beginning of the Catholic Church's calendar year.

We have a shorter Advent this year (only twenty-two days long!). Christmas Eve is the Fourth Monday of Advent, with Christmas falling on Tuesday. 4 weeks isn't long, but that still leaves plenty of time to spend some quiet time preparing for Jesus' coming. Common Advent traditions include an Advent calendar, the Advent wreath, and special Advent prayers.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

- John 3:16

Surrounded By Saints

The Historic Church of Saint Patrick, Focus on Saints, November, 2019
Week Four: November 24, 2019

Our wonderful saints are so much more than a statue, an icon, a window depiction, or a holy card. This week, however, we can continue to feast our eyes on twenty-four such depictions here at The Historic Church of Saint Patrick. This exercise may require a bit of neck-craning, or can be left until you exit the church. On the west side of the church, along and over the side aisle, are six of the Apostles. Saints Mathias, Barnabas, Simon, Thaddeus, James the Less, and Thomas. Along the east expanse of the church are depicted six more Apostles, Saints Peter, Paul, Andrew, James, Bartholomew, and Philip. These windows are certainly a source for names chosen by many parents for their children. What a meaningful way to begin a study of saints, by focusing in on your own patron saints/namesakes.

If you are exiting the church, you must look quickly, or stop and pause for a moment, to see the next six images. Look up at the choir loft. (Perhaps the postlude music is still emanating forth beautifully.) To the left and right are gallery windows that are larger than life-size. Saint Cecilia, the patron of musicians, is holding an organ, and is said to be looking toward the choir, giving inspiration. King David is strumming on his harp, a source of beautiful music from and for God and for us in the Psalms. Just below the choir balcony is a series of four rondel canvases, showing the Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Walk into the narthex, and look around you for another representation of the same four, statues in niches of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The symbolism in their depictions is worthy of a study!

And so, our four-week look at the saints gazing down at us from the altars, walls, niches, and windows of our beautiful church comes to a close. There are other saints within the walls and outdoors at HSP. Spend some time finding them. Spend some time reading about the saints and their lives. Look to them as companions in prayer, examples of Christian holiness, patrons, and intercessors. Look to them as members of our Holy Family!

"Each day we should expose ourselves to the inspiration of others. Thousands of saints and wise men and women have left us messages of hope and encouragement. Read what is honest. Read the Scriptures and the commentaries. Read great literature and poetry. Read the Psalms. Read that which expresses the anguish and the exhilaration of experience, and teaches us that we are not alone."

(From Always We Begin Again, the Benedictine Way of Living, Author: John McQuiston)

Oh, and as you leave HSP, walking to the fountain entrance, and to the car for your drive home, look at the people around you. We are, indeed, surrounded by saints.



Yoga of Giving

Attend a free yoga class led by Anne Boyle, RYT, to benefit the Immaculate Conception Community Food Bank. This class will be suitable for all levels.

Please bring a donation of non-perishable food items or personal hygiene items and support this worthy cause. All are welcome.

Saturday, December 7, 2019

9:30-10:30 a.m

The Historic Church of St. Patrick

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