The word *advent* comes from the Latin term *adventus* meaning “arrival” or “coming.” Particularly the coming of something having great importance, originating sometime after the 4th century as a time of fasting and preparation for Epiphany rather than in anticipation of Christmas. At this time new Christians were baptized and received into the faith. It was then the early church instituted a 40-day period of fasting and repentance.

In the sixth century St. Gregory, the Great was the first to associate it with the coming of Christ, but not the birth of but the second coming.

*Advent* or *adventus* which was the translation of the Greek *Parousia –* a word used for both the coming of Christ in human flesh and his second coming.

In the ninth century the Church formally recognized Advent as the four Sundays before Christmas. With the first Sunday marking the beginning of the Church calendar.

Even the color of the candles carries a significance. Purple symbolizes repentance and royalty. Pink represents Joy and rejoicing. White for purity and light honoring the birth of Christ.

What is going to be different for you with the “arrival” of Advent this year? Will this year carry any more significance than any in the past? I know we are all busy, some frantic about the preparation for Christmas. But is it the right preparation? To worry about the right gifts, how to wrap them, the food, the parties, the decorations and all the planning and effort you put into it. Is that where our focus should be?

Fr. Mike Schmitz through Ascension is offering a journey through the daily readings as he reveals God’s love with exclusive daily video reflections and scripture passages. Discover who God is, who we are, and how we are made worthy to stand in his presence.

Fr. Mike askes, “What if you knew that December 25th Christmas Day was the day that you were going to die?” He continues. “The way we live Advent would have to change. We would have to live with intentionality. We would have to live it with purpose. We would have to live it with grace.”

Set aside a time to decompress and begin an evening practice of specific prayer. Take time to write notes of encouragement and gratitude in your Christmas cards to people in your life by doing a few each day. We all need reminders that we are seen, loved and known.

Grow closer to the saints. The liturgical calendar dedicates saints to each day of the week. Read about the saint of the day and ask for their intercession for someone close to your heart.

Pray an Advent Devotional. Maybe a Fast, not from food! But from social media, entertainment, politics, your phone, or other avoidable distractions. Visit the lonely, those feeling unwanted, perhaps in your neighborhood, the church, or even your family. It may be as simple as a phone call or great as an invitation to dinner.

“Be patient in all things but first with yourself.” A good quote from St. Francis de Sales. We should have God in our hearts especially during Advent. He accepts us in all our imperfections. He wants more for us not from us.

Be the light of this Advent and let your light shine on all those who need to see the Lord, through you.

May this season of Advent be blessed for you and your families.

David Liptak

Evangelization & Discipleship Coordinator