Advent is the time of year when we prepare for Jesus' birth, God's incarnation that occurred just over two thousand years ago. But today's Gospel reminds us that this is not Christ's only coming we should prepare ourselves for. Sometime, on a day we cannot foresee, the Lord will return to judge the living and the dead. "Watch," Jesus encourages his disciples, for we must always be ready to receive him. Finally, we also prepare for his coming into our hearts at any time—at many times—throughout our lives, often when we least expect. Now and always, let our hearts prepare him room!

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p.
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p.
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:
Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p.
A reading from the Book of Isaiah *Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7*

You, LORD, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you, while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old.

No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful; all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 80: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19*

R/. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.
R/. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse your power, and come to save us. **R/.**

Once again, O LORD of hosts, look down from heaven, and see; take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong. **R/.**

May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
Then we will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians *1 Corinthians 1: 3-9*

Brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Mark 13: 33-37*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark **Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- Even as Isaiah pleads to God to come down to earth, he laments the sinfulness of the world. Not even he is exempt: "all of us have become like unclean people" (Isaiah 64:5). The word *unclean* may remind us of lepers in ancient times, who shouted that word to warn others that they were approaching. We know what Jesus did for lepers. He healed them, he restored them to the community, he made them clean. As we are all sinners, we are all unclean as well. Therefore, we shout, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Come and make us clean!

- Saint Paul, writing to the Corinthians to further teach them about the Lord, in whose name they had recently been baptized, is much more hopeful. He asserts that Jesus will keep them beyond reproach as they wait for the Lord's second coming. How? It is through the grace of God, the grace that brought Jesus here in the first place. It is that grace we receive unconditionally that shows the extraordinary love and mercy God has for us all.

- "Be alert!" Jesus commands his disciples (Mark 13:33). With the instant communication available in the twenty-first century, this should be simple and feel perfectly normal. After all, most of us now are used to regularly getting emergency alerts, amber alerts, severe weather alerts, and breaking news alerts on our phones. We are alert! Unfortunately, in waiting for our phones to buzz or vibrate, we lose our alertness to what's happening right in front of us. Remember, Jesus can come to us in many ways and most of them do not involve mountains quaking or the heavens rending. May we be alert to the desperate plea of the person in need, the unexpected stranger at the door, or the opportunity to give someone something that means little to you but everything to them, for Jesus is incarnate in the world in many different ways. "Watch!" (Mark 13:37).

Question of the Week

Over these next four weeks, how will I remain alert for Jesus' coming into my life?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Saint Paul reminds us of God's faithfulness. That faithfulness gives us the confidence to present our needs and the needs of our brothers and sisters to the Lord.

- For the Church, that we may always exercise mercy, love, and compassion to the least of our sisters and brothers, ensuring that when Christ comes again, he will meet us doing right, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For leaders of nations, that they may pursue justice and peace with patience and allow it to take root in every conflict-torn region, from battlefields around the world to the streets of our cities, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who are hungry and homeless, those who are destitute and desperate, that they may receive a share of God's bounty here on earth, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those around the world suffering from HIV/AIDS who cannot afford or access treatment for the disease, that the reach of life-changing medicine may be extended to all, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For our faith community, that our works of charity and mercy may prepare us for each coming of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you are the potter and we are the clay. Shape our wills so that we may be faithful witnesses to your love and mercy. We ask this through the One who best revealed those virtues through his ministry two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p.
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**