

Advent: A Time for Prayer and Preparation

By Maria Huemmer, Public Relations and Outreach Coordinator, Texas Catholic Conference

Prior to the start of Jesus' adult ministry, we hear the words of his cousin, John the Baptist, calling the people to "prepare the way of the Lord."

Advent is a season of preparation. Not just the preparation of Christmas trees and wreaths and lights, of lists of gifts and recipes and volunteering activities, but also of preparation and anticipation for the birth of Jesus our Savior.

Christians around the world will take time to again reflect on the dignity of human life, despite the harrowing turns that human life can take. They will remember the flight of a young, migrating family facing an unplanned pregnancy. Of a baby born into poverty, who only nearly escaped persecution by a jealous king. And in joyfully proclaiming "Today is born our Savior," they foresee the Messiah in his crowning moment as he breaks the chains of death, a moment that is not tainted nor diminished by his conviction as a criminal or his painful crucifixion.

In January, Texas will begin its 81st Legislative Session. We invite you to take some time during this Advent season to prepare for the upcoming session by educating yourself as a Faithful Catholic Citizen. Visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops web site (www.USCCB.org) to learn about federal issues and visit the Texas Catholic Conference web site (www.TXcatholic.org) to learn more about the Texas Bishops' legislative agenda. Sign up for our newsletter and action alerts to receive news on how you can help be a voice for the Church to the Texas and national legislatures.

At the very least, this Advent, as you prepare your hearts for the coming of our Savior, find time to pray and reflect on the gift of life all around you, an inherent dignity that all people are endowed with. A dignity that is not affected or lessened by the economy, by who won the elections, by what football team is going to what bowl game, or who buys the most expensive Christmas gifts.

Let us pray:

Loving Father, we thank you for the gift of life that you have given for all people.

We praise you for our Bishops, priests, catechists, teachers, and all who help us grow in our spiritual life.

We praise you for families, those domestic churches, who, despite trying economic times, work to share the miracle of Christmas with their children.

We pray for the courage to recognize the dignity of all people and to treat those around us with the dignity that we give your Son, including those who are different from us, whether economically, culturally, politically or otherwise.

We pray for all of our elected officials, that they will be guided by your Advent message of Love for All, and we pray that we have the strength to use our voices for the voiceless who are effected by law and policy.

The Texas Catholic Conference wishes you a blessed and prayerful Advent and a wonderful Christmas. Maria Huemmer is the public relations and outreach coordinator for the Texas Catholic Conference and can be reached at maria@txcatholic.org