



Theology Corner

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Theological Reflections by Paul Chutikorn - Director of Faith Formation

“How can we best prepare for Christmas?”

As I mentioned a couple weeks ago, Advent is a time of preparing for the coming of Christ in our lives. Remember, this coming or *adventus* is in the form of Christ coming down to us taking on humanity, in the form of Christ coming to us today in the Sacraments, and Christ coming to us at the end of time. But how do we prepare for the reality of any of things? The best way is to ensure that we draw near to the Lord. There are many ways to do this, but I'll propose a formula by which we are able to build on our spirituality over the rest of Advent, Christmas, and hopefully into our daily lives throughout the year. As with anything, the only way to remain strong on a consistent basis is by building good habits. In light of this, here is an acronym that should help you get closer to God and prepare for His coming: **H.A.B.I.T.S.**

H – Holy Hour: Dedicate an hour of your time to prayer. Liturgy of the Hours is a good way to do this, but it can be any form of prayer and really for any amount of time. The key is to start small and progressively increase your duration of prayer over time. How can we expect to be close to someone if we don't even talk to them?

A – Accountability: Confide in your spouse, good friend, or a family member that you trust and discuss with them the things that you want to do to improve your relationship with God. You could even partner with them and do it together. The point here is to have someone to hold you accountable. Someone to help you to succeed in these goals. Someone who will pick you up when you fall.

B – Bible: Reading scripture is so important in order to gain an authentic closeness to Jesus. Why? Because that is where we actually find His life and teachings. There's a reason St. Jerome said, "Ignorance of the scriptures is an ignorance of Christ." If we don't really know Christ, how can we claim to love him? We want to take advantage of this great gift where God reveals His will to us and calls us out. Will you respond?

I – Invest: We can gain a closeness to God by investing our time in the mission of the Church. This can be done by caring for the poor, tithing to support your parish, serving through volunteering for religious education or any other parish groups. The point here is make sure that we are not only taking, but also giving when we can. We were created to be social beings. What this means is that the mission of Christ cannot be carried out by working alone. We must work in communion with each other as the Body of Christ.

T – Tell: Jesus wants us to make disciples of all nations. In order to ensure that the Gospel message remains strong in society, we have to tell others about the faith and invite them to faith in Christ. This doesn't have to be a pushy thing, or a door to door type evangelization, but one where you are at least planting seeds that could one day bear fruit by and through His grace.

S – Sacraments: The most intimate way to get close to Christ is by taking advantage of His Sacraments. By doing so, we are really partaking of his very divine nature. What this means is that through the sacraments He offers us a piece of himself by extending His grace to us so that we may grow in faith and be transformed by His love. What better way to prepare for His coming than by being reconciled to Him in confession? Or how when we meet Him when He comes down from heaven in the Eucharist and offers to us His body, blood, soul, and divinity?