

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent (A)  
December 7, 2025  
“Remember Pearl Harbor!”

**S**unday, December 7, 1941 began like many days in the Hawaiian Islands. Naval officers were having breakfast or starting golf games; soldiers slept in after parties the previous evening; a few sailors fished off the docks of Pearl Harbor. None suspected how rapidly and radically their lives were about to change.

At 7:55 in the morning, Japanese warplanes and torpedo bombers attacked the Pacific Fleet anchored at Pearl. Hours later, 19 ships, including 8 battleships and 300 planes were destroyed, and more than 240-hundred men and women were dead or wounded. One of the casualties was Father Al Schmitt from Saint Lucas, who died assisting injured sailors aboard the *USS Oklahoma*.

In the aftermath of the Japanese attack, a motto was born. It was simple: “Remember Pearl Harbor,” and it inspired a nation to turn its attention to the global conflict surrounding it.

We read a similar motto in Matthew’s Gospel. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Matthew writes: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

That is the Advent mission, our duty, our calling, our focus: to prepare for Jesus Christ to come anew into our hearts and lives.

John the Baptist, who wore simple clothes and ate a primitive diet, spent his years preaching in the desert, baptizing sinners, and calling for repentance. To repent means to change the course and direction of our lives. Advent is a call to repent.

How do we prepare the way of the Lord? I would suggest three simple ways to prepare our hearts for the coming Christ.

**First**, renewal of baptismal promises. At baptism, our parents and godparents pledged to renounce Satan, his works, and empty promises, and profess Christ. But that is not a once in a lifetime commitment. As we know from the Gospels, Satan rears his ugly head again and again, tempting Jesus in the desert and throughout his life, even at the Cross.

We have a weekly opportunity to renew our baptismal promises when we come into church, dip our fingers in holy water, and make the Sign of the Cross. I suggest you do this in an intentional way, and pray silently, “I renounce Satan and pronounce Christ.” That’s it. This mini-ritual will call to your mind the duties imposed in baptism.

**Second**, we prepare by repenting of sin. That means examining our consciences, asking hard questions, being sorry, making a Good Confession, and doing penance with a firm resolution to sin no more. To repent means to turn away from false gods, to clean up our language, to keep good company, to grow in holiness, to avoid sexual sins, to tell the truth, and to desist from anything that displeases the Lord.

When you get on the wrong road, you don’t keep going. You turn around and get on the right road. But you can’t get on the right road by continuing down the wrong road. Repent means to change direction.

**Finally**, we prepare for Christ by reflecting. Advent is a beautiful four-week period of preparation. It is a time to start new habits. Consider reading a new book in order to gain new insights, new ideas, and new information. What you feed your mind, you feed your soul. If you attend daily Mass, I encourage you to think about the daily readings, and try putting one insight you hear into practice. The quickest way to heaven is to read the daily readings and live them in their fullness. It works!

There you have it: One Advent message, “Prepare” and three ways to do it: Renew, Repent, and Reflect.

The motto “Remember Pearl Harbor” inspired a generation to defeat totalitarianism in the 1940s. May the motto “Prepare the way of the Lord” inspire a new generation in the 2020s to make this the best Christmas ever.

God bless you.