

# The Pray More Advent Retreat

Inspiring talks to help you  
prepare to celebrate the  
birth of our Lord,  
Jesus Christ



## Having Great Hope in God's Plan

By Fr. Nathan Cromly, CJS

"We must have confidence in God, Who is what He always has been, and we must not be disheartened because things turn out contrary to us."

-Saint Philip

### Reflective Questions

"Wait upon the Lord; be faithful to His commandments; He will elevate your hope, and put you in possession of His Kingdom. Wait upon Him patiently; wait upon Him by avoiding all sin. He will come, doubt it not; and in the approaching day of His visitation, which will be that of your death and His judgment, He will Himself crown your holy hope. Place all your hope in the Heart of Jesus; it is a safe asylum; for he who trusts in God is sheltered and protected by His mercy. To this firm hope, join the practice of virtue, and even in this life you will begin to taste the ineffable joys of Paradise."

-Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Father and Doctor of the Church

1. How did Mary prepare for Advent? How can you emulate some of those things as you prepare for Christ's coming?
2. God has already been preparing you and working in you to prepare you for Advent. Just as Mary's Advent truly began with the Annunciation, what are some ways that you have seen God preparing you for the coming of Christ before this Advent season even began?

3. Fr. Nathan points out that even our sorrows, struggles, financial difficulties, illnesses, social difficulties and other sufferings of our lives have all been a part of our Lord preparing us. This may hurt, but is it possible for you to recognize God's hand, will and way in any of these situations in your life? What about just His presence as He has walked alongside you, maybe silently, during those trials?
4. God prepares us by waiting and by the dryness of what we think we need to have. Think about in your life where God is asking you to wait right now. And instead of seeing there a type of coldness or aloofness of our Holy Father - who is never cold or never aloof - try to see, instead, His preparation. He is asking us to thirst. The greater our desire, the more apt we are to open ourselves to receive the intensity of His gift.
5. God always comes into our life to expand what we thought was possible, to take us to the next level, and to open us to a depth that we didn't think possible. He comes to disturb an otherwise human peace. Do we expect God to surprise us, or have we grown routine in what we expect of Him?
6. Are you ready for God to challenge you and to take you deeper? If not, what are the things you need to do, and the ways you need to work on yourself, so that you can be?
7. Fr. Nathan says the heart of Mary says, "Whatever God wants, how He wants it, as long as He wants it." What is one area of your life that you could use this quote as an inspiration to endure your trials and to walk forward in faith? Consider writing this quote down and put it somewhere you'll see it daily during this season.
8. Consider praying this prayer regularly throughout this Advent season in preparation of Christ's coming: "God, I want You to take me into Your plans for my life."