Sometimes Advent can seem a bit artificial
— kind of a concoction to get us excited about Christmas.
After all, the birth of Christ happened a long time ago.
What’s the point of pretending that it hasn’t?
It’s like going through the motions of “expectation”
when we know that Christmas really is just around the corner.

BUT, the cycle of the seasons that we Catholics live through each year
is not meant to be an exercise in “let’s pretend.”
The cycle of seasons is a recognition that the entry of God into our lives,
is still, in many ways, unfinished,
even though it was accomplished at baptism.

As long as we breathe, there is more of our lives to open, to unlock.
Whether you’re 28 or 88, there is no end to the ways
that the word of God can, in a fuller way, take on our flesh.

The words of Isaiah we just heard will be just as true
three years from now as they are today
“We are the clay, you are the potter, we are the work of your hands.”
That work will never end until the day we breathe our last.

St. Paul reminds the Corinthians and us
that we are all a work in progress.
We are gifted beyond our dreams, he assures us.
But we are always in the position
of “waiting for the revelation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus, in today’s Gospel, warns about being lulled in complacency.
He says it twice, “Watch!
You don’t know when the time will come.”
Time for what?
For Jesus to come and shake us up but one more time.

I’m reminded of some wise words from a colorful British writer,
Sheila Cassidy, who says:
“God is no more present in church than in a bar,
but we generally are more present to God in church
than we are in a bar.
The problem of presence is not with God, but with us.

Karl Rahner, great German, Jesuit theologian,
was once asked whether he believed in miracles.
His answer: “I don’t believe in them,
I rely on them to get through each day!”
It’s about being on watch, waiting

Last evening, I went to Weber Center in Adrian to celebrate Mass with those discerning leadership in the IHMs.
One of most significant roles of leadership in a religious community and in the whole Church is to remind people of the miracles that surround us each day.

Last Friday, Dec. 1, was World AIDS Day. We've been doing that since 1988.
Sisters gave out red ribbons here that day, a reminder to see the presence of Christ even in something as perplexing as this dread disease.

So Advent is not an exercise in “let's pretend.” It’s about waiting, watching, for surely God is coming to shake us up one more time.