

# Dear Padre,

## Is Advent a penitential season?

Strictly speaking, the penitential times in the Church are “every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent” (*Code of Canon Law*, 1250). Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas when Christ’s First Coming is remembered, and this remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ’s Second Coming at the end of time. (See *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar*, 39.) While Advent is more anticipatory than penitential, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops states, “Advent also includes an element of penance in the sense of preparing, quieting, and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas.” Although, historically, Advent was similar to Lent as a forty-day period of prayer and fasting, it was less severe than the season preceding Easter, and it lacked uniformity in the Western Church. The Eastern Church still begins the Nativity Fast on November 15, while in the Western Church, Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas.

Regardless, the significant focus of Advent is our Lord’s coming (*adventus* in Latin). The Church reflects this anticipation of Advent through such practices as limiting floral arrangements in the sanctuary, simpler liturgical music, and omitting the Gloria at Mass until Christmas. We can also reflect the anticipation of Advent through such spiritual practices as participation in works of charity, moderation in shopping, celebration of the sacrament of penance, fasting on Fridays, and prayerful contemplation on our Savior’s Incarnation. ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 1	December 2	December 3	December 4	December 5	December 6	December 7
Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	St. Francis Xavier, Priest	Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Second Sunday of Advent
Is 4:2–6	Is 11:1–10	Is 25:6–10a	Is 26:1–6	Is 29:17–24	Is 30:19–21, 23–26	Is 11:1–10
Mt 8:5–11	Lk 10:21–24	Mt 15:29–37	Mt 7:21, 24–27	Mt 9:27–31	Mt 9:35–10:1, 5a, 6–8	Rom 15:4–9
						Mt 3:1–12



### A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

We are called to offer God’s love to everyone, in order to achieve that unity which does not cancel out differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people. Brothers and sisters, this is the hour for love! The heart of the gospel is the love of God that makes us brothers and sisters.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 18, 2025

## St. Agnes • St. Boniface • St. John the Evangelist

Rev. Michael Pampara Pastor email: [pamparasdb@gmail.com](mailto:pamparasdb@gmail.com)

Father Michael Cell 308-660-5730

P O Box 309, Stapleton, NE 69163, email: [abj Catholics@gmail.com](mailto:abj Catholics@gmail.com)

Parish Office 308-636-2421; Secretary, Kristie Walz Cell 308-636-8399

Website: [www.abj Catholic.org](http://www.abj Catholic.org) - Facebook Page: St Agnes, St Boniface & St John the Evangelist

## Waiting, but Quick!

MIGUEL DULICK

This is the first Sunday of Advent, and the excitement is palpable. Writing 800 years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah sounds like breaking news: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.” The psalmist announces we are already there: “And now we have set foot within your gates, O Jerusalem.” Saint Paul tickles our fancy with another whole round of “revelation” yet to come “on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Only Jesus himself seems a little cautious: “Be watchful! Be alert!” The Lord “is coming,” but he’s not here yet. Leave it to Jesus to force the paradox for which Advent seems to have been created: Jesus is present, but we dare not “sleep,” lest we miss him!

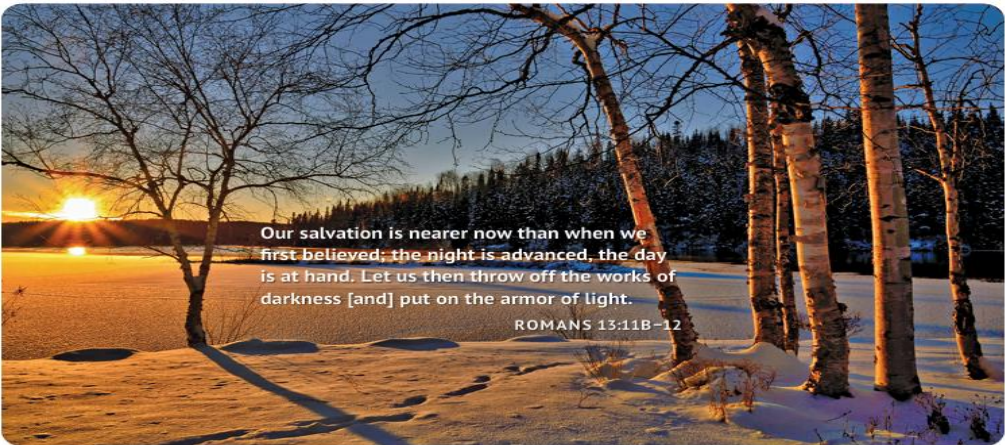
How do we wait for Christmas? After Halloween, the Christmas lights go up, the carols start, the “Merry Christmas!” / “Happy Holidays!” debate begins. Lent is a time for repentance, alms, and fasting. But there’s no fasting in Advent: we fill bags with gifts and stockings with goodies. The Church tries to slow us down and encourage a little reflecting to prepare the way, led by John the Baptist. So let’s keep waiting; let’s hold on to our peace. Christmas Eve will be here soon enough. But let’s not be too austere. A full menu of holiday parties and concerts and family feasts can legitimately “anticipate” Christmas. Let’s cheer each other: Merry Advent! ●

### Reflect

What can I do to prepare for Christmas mindfully, peacefully, and joyfully?



SCAN TO  
LEARN ABOUT  
AUTHOR  
MIGUEL  
DULICK



Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light.

ROMANS 13:11B–12



# First Sunday of Advent (A) Nov 30, 2025

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of a new liturgical year for the Church. The Advent season includes the four Sundays that precede Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. Key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice.

In this new liturgical year, the Gospel of Matthew will be the primary Gospel proclaimed (Lectionary Cycle A). In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus speak about the need for wakefulness, for watchful waiting, for the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew's Gospel is dated by most scholars after 70 A.D. Most believe that Matthew wrote for a primarily Jewish community, but one that was no longer centered on the Temple in Jerusalem. These were Jewish Christians trying to come to terms with their relationship to Judaism in a new situation: Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. There may have been Christians who believed that the events of the world around them gave evidence of the imminent return of the Lord in glory.

The passage from Matthew we read today is rather straightforward. No one knows the precise time of the coming of the Lord in glory, so watchful waiting and vigilance are required. The passage speaks to the uselessness of looking for signs; there will be none. As a thief sneaks in during the night, so will the Lord's coming in glory be.

The question for us as members of the Christian community, then, is how do we prepare for this? Today's passage speaks more about the manner of waiting, rather than the details of the preparation. Jesus compares the vigilance required of Christians to the vigilance of a homeowner who knows the plans of the thief. If one knows that the thief's action is imminent, one remains watchful. As Christians, we know *that* our Lord is coming even if we cannot know the precise timing. Jesus calls us to be watchful and vigilant, like the homeowner. If we become lax in our Christian living, we may be caught unprepared.

## Mass Schedule & Intentions For the week of Dec 1, 2025

Mon.	Dec.	01	7:00 AM	SJ	Edgar Rikmanis †
Tues.	Dec..	02	7:00 AM	SJ	No Mass
Wed.	Dec.	03	6:00 PM	SJ	Barbara Hughes †
Thurs.	Dec.	04	5:30 PM	SB	Conrad & Theresa Wildhagen †
Fri.	Dec.	05	8:30 AM	SJ	Jack Hughes †
Sat.	Dec.	06	5:30 PM	SJ	People of the Parish †
Sun.	Dec.	07	9:30 AM	SA	Maurice Andre †
Sun.	Dec.	07	11:00 AM	SB	Ridder Family

## Blessed Maria Angela Astorch (1592-1665) Feast day December 2

”Let your love be like Christ’s love, revealing itself not only in feelings, but in deeds.”



Bobbi Opela Dec 1<sup>st</sup>  
Chancy Boeser Dec 4<sup>th</sup>  
Thomas Kennedy Dec 7<sup>th</sup>



Mr. & Mrs. James Long Dec 4<sup>th</sup>  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Phelps Dec 7<sup>th</sup>

## Ministry Schedule

Date: Dec 6 & 7	St Agnes	St Boniface	St John’s
Time	Sunday 9:30 AM	Sunday 11:00 AM	Saturday 5:30 PM
Hospitality	Sue D. & Pam L.	Chancy & Roni B.	Todd & Lyndi W.
Lector	John B.	Carla K.	Kristy O.
Server		Quinton B & Dylan P.	Kelsey A. & Avery B.
EMHC	Evan B. & Gary M.	Steve & Kristen B.	Jon & Molly W.
Communion to shut ins or Music		Kristen B.	Music: Jenny J.

### St. Agnes

Our Gifts to God & Church  
November 23, 2025

Total Collection: \$252.00

Diocesan Appeal

Dollar Goal the  
GOAL is MET!!!

Thrift Store  
Open Dec 12<sup>th</sup> 9AM to 4PM

CCD Oct Dec 3rd  
Elementary 3:40 PM  
High School 7:30 PM Meal Barraza

### St. Boniface

Our Gifts to God & Church  
November 23, 2025

Total Collection: \$1210.00

Diocesan Appeal

Dollar Goal \$3800 of \$7452 with  
11 of 17 Donors

CCD Wed. Dec 3rd  
PreK to 2<sup>nd</sup> 4-5 PM  
Supper 6:10 NO CLASS for others  
Class 6:30 to 7:30 PM

Christmas Toy Drive Drop off  
concealed new toys at church from  
Dec. 1 to Dec 14 to be given to the  
Callaway Hospital

### St. John’s

Our Gifts to God & Church  
November 23, 2025

Total Collection: \$890.67

Diocesan Appeal

Dollar Goal \$2200 of \$5179  
with 6 of 15 Donors

CCD Wed, Dec 3rd  
PreK to 5th 3:40 PM  
6th -12<sup>th</sup> Supper 6:30 Boeser  
Class Begins 7:00 PM

Mark your calendar  
There will be a  
meeting at St. Mary’s  
in Oconto on Monday  
January 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:00  
PM to make decisions  
about the church.

Holy Day of Obligation  
Immaculate Conception  
December 8<sup>th</sup>

St John 7:00 AM  
St Agnes 4:30 PM  
St Boniface 6:00 PM

### Council of Catholic Women Baby Drive

IN HONOR OF THE  
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Please help us collect items for the  
Women’s Resouce Center by placing your items  
in the play pen in the Church Hall by December 8th.  
Item Suggestions:

Newborn & 0-3 month clothes Baby Hygiene Items  
Adult Hygiene Items Baby Bottles Baby Socks  
Baby Bath Towels Pacifiers Brush and comb sets  
Diapers sizes 4, 5, 6 Pullups