



John of Patmos watches the descent of New Jerusalem from God
Unknown 14th century tapestry

ADVENT REFLECTION

Part One: The Longing of the Human Heart
Advent as Desire, Expectation, and Holy Hunger

Advent begins not with fulfillment, but with desire. It opens with a cry, a question, a reaching—an ache within the human heart that refuses to be satisfied by anything less than God Himself. Long before the candles are lit and the hymns are sung, Advent speaks to the quiet yearning that lives deep in every soul, a yearning older than Israel and more personal than our own memories. It is the longing St. Augustine confessed when he wrote, *“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.”* Advent takes that restlessness and teaches us to see it not as a burden, but as a gift.

The Church Fathers understood that salvation history is the story of God awakening desire within His people. St. Irenaeus described the human person as being “slowly accustomed to God,” gradually stretched by desire until we become capable of receiving the Infinite. Our longing is not a sign that God is absent—it is the sign that God is drawing near. Advent sharpens that longing. It reminds us that we are waiting for Someone, and that the waiting itself forms the heart for love.

The first note of Advent is found not in Bethlehem, but in the wilderness. The prophet Isaiah cries out, *“Comfort, comfort my people”*—yet the comfort he promises is not immediate relief, but the assurance that God has heard the cry. Israel waits in darkness, but it is not a passive waiting. It is alert, searching, aching. As St. Catherine of Siena wrote, *“The soul grows in virtue by desiring God.”* Holy desire stretches the soul, enlarges it. It is only the hungry who can feast; only the thirsty who truly drink.

The saints teach us that longing always precedes union. St. Teresa of Avila, reflecting on her own interior struggles, often speaks of that “holy dissatisfaction” that pushes us deeper into prayer. She writes that God sometimes withdraws sensible sweetness precisely so that we learn to desire the Giver more than His gifts. Advent is that school of desire. It invites us into the silence where God stirs the heart, purifies it, and teaches it to expect Him.

This desire is not simply emotional. It is eschatological—oriented toward the ultimate fulfillment of all creation. Pope Benedict XVI wrote that Christian hope is “performative,” not merely informative; that is, hope changes us, shapes us, and directs our lives. In Advent we remember that creation itself “groans” in expectation (Rom 8:22). Every sigh, every disappointment, every longing we experience is mysteriously connected to this cosmic yearning for the Redeemer.

(Continued on page 2)

The First Sunday of Advent
30 November 2025

Sacred Heart, Ronan
Immaculate Conception, Polson
St. Joseph Mission, Charlo

Fr. Kevin Christofferson, Pastor
Nate McNeil, Director of Faith Formation
Katie Devlin, Office Manager

Parish Office

PO Box 1477 Polson, MT 59860
Phone: 406-883-2506
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Email: lakecountyromancatholic@gmail.com
Website: www.lakecountyromancatholic.org

This week’s office hours:

Wednesday & Friday 9 am—12 pm | Tuesday & Thursday 2 - 5 pm

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday at 6:00 pm

Confessions are available at 5:00 pm
Rosary is prayed at 5:30 pm

Sunday at 11:00 am

Rosary is prayed at 10:30 am

Wednesday at 12:10 pm

Confessions are heard at 11:30 am and again after Mass during a period of Eucharistic Adoration.

Thursday at 8:00 am

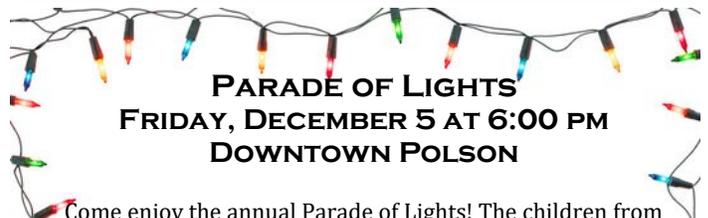
SACRED HEART MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday at 9:00 am

Friday at 9:00 am

Followed by a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration
Confession will be offered during the Holy Hour until Benediction at 10:30 am.

Mass is offered at St. Joseph Mission in Charlo the **third Saturday** of each month at 4:00 pm.



PARADE OF LIGHTS
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 6:00 PM
DOWNTOWN POLSON

Come enjoy the annual Parade of Lights! The children from our Religious Ed. program will have a float in the parade, and as always we will be hosting a chili booth!



Fr. Christofferson will be leading a brief study on the *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales and taking a deeper dive into the bulletin inserts during the season of Advent. Classes will be **5:45 pm** on the Wednesdays of December **3rd**, **10th**, and the **17th** during Family Night.

(Continued from page 1)

But Advent is also deeply personal. St. Francis de Sales loved to remind Christians that God is “the God of the human heart.” He never barges in; He waits to be desired. Desire opens the door. Desire prepares the soul. Desire is the first liturgy of Advent.

Yet the world resists longing. Modern life fills every silence, numbs every ache, and distracts every desire. We are conditioned to avoid waiting at all costs. But the saints insist: without longing, there is no encounter. Without expectation, there is no revelation. Without hunger, there is no feast. Advent is our annual call to return to the truth of our own hearts—to rediscover the desires that point toward God, and to let them awaken.

St. Alphonsus of Ligouri once wrote that the greatest tragedy of the spiritual life is not sin, but “the lack of desire for God.” Advent exists to heal that tragedy. It bids us to turn inward long enough to notice the cracks in our hearts where divine light wants to seep in. It calls us to face our restlessness without fear, trusting that even our discontent can become a prayer.

In this season, the Church whispers gently but firmly: “Lift up your hearts.” Lift them up in longing. Lift them up in hope. Lift them up in holy hunger. For the One we long for is already coming—quietly, tenderly, steadily. And the heart that longs for Him will not be disappointed.

SCRIPTURE FOR PRAYER & REFLECTION

1. Isaiah 40:1-5

“Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God...
A voice cries in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord...
Every valley shall be lifted up,
every mountain and hill made low...
and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.”

2. Romans 8:22-25

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now...
We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption...
For in hope we were saved.”

3. Psalm 63:1-8

“O God, you are my God,
for you I long;
for you my soul thirsts,
like a dry weary land without water...”

Questions for Reflection:

What do I truly desire?
Not what I should desire, but what my heart honestly longs for today.

Where in my life do I resist waiting?
What does this reveal about my trust in God’s timing?

How do I typically respond to interior restlessness?
Do I numb it, avoid it, or bring it into prayer?

What longing has God placed in me that I have ignored or buried?

How does the idea of Advent as “holy hunger” change the way I approach this season?

A Challenge for the Coming Week:

Practice 15 minutes of daily silence.

No phone.
No music.
No distractions.

Simply sit before God and do these three things:

- Notice what desires rise within you.
- Offer them honestly to the Lord—without judging them.
- Ask Him to make your heart long for what He longs to give.
- Write down any patterns or insights you discover by the end of the week.

Liturgy Calendar & Mass Intentions

Sacred Heart & St. Joseph Mission

Sunday, November 30th

First Sunday of Advent
Sick & Shut-Ins of the Parish

Friday, December 5th

Repose of the Soul of Joe Knudsen, rb Katie Devlin

Immaculate Conception

Saturday, November 29th

Vigil of the First Sunday of Advent
Special All Souls Intentions

Sunday, November 30th

First Sunday of Advent
Intentions of the Parish Faithful

Wednesday, December 3rd

Repose of the Soul of Teri Hughes, rb Pat Hughes

Thursday, December 4th

Intentions of Pope Leo XIV

PRAYER CORNER

Humbly asking for your prayers...

Maryalice Rouselle, The Clay Family, Virginia Rubel, Michael Conrad, Kaylee Martin, Dave Evertz, Steve Ducharme, Bill Nash, Donna Jacobs, Derrie Edge, Heather Stocki, Betty Bjork, Jason Avison, Nash Niemeyer, Richard Call, Bud Cheff, Jr, Bill Rueth, Monte Jenkins, Chris Skinner, Ryan Johnson, Vicki Whalen, Laurel Cheff, Zane Kelly, Rod Clairmont, David Jenkins, Bruce Simpson, Debbie Tschida, Grace Shafer, Carolyn Fyant, Diana Cote, Shawna Lehner, Bill Efinger.



Please help to keep the list current by contacting the Parish Office. Also, out of respect for a person's privacy, please make sure that all individuals wish to be publicly identified.

The Holy Father's prayer intention for December

For Christians in areas of conflict:

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

Please pray for our seminarians!

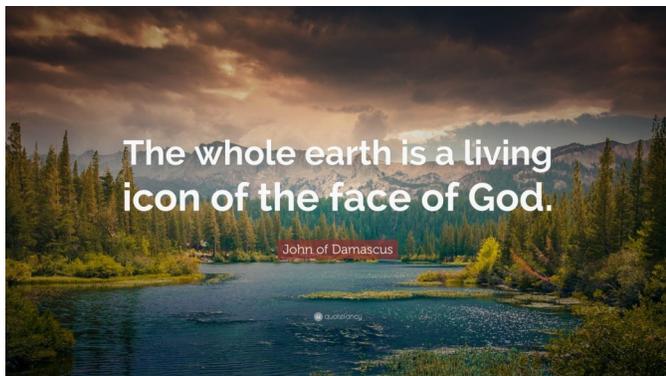
Dcn. Kaleb Mitchell, Riley Helgoe, Brett Rotz, Anthony Olmes, James Semling, Jamie Severson, Carter Anderson, Shae Bills, Matt Keck, Carson Gorton, Jake Smith, Ryan Frampton, Liam Aippersbach, Mason Yochum.



Want a great opportunity to volunteer and help the needy in our community? Helping Hands has the perfect opportunity for you! We have Holiday Helping Hands which is replacing the annual Bell Ringing with the Salvation Army.

100% of the money collected will stay in Lake County! Immaculate Conception Church Day will be Friday, December 12 at Super One.

To sign up please call Toni Whealon at 406-253-2096. If you would like a different day we can arrange that too. Help our neighbors in need.



2026 Summer Camp Season CAMPS SCHEDULE

June 14-19	Junior High #1	July 12-17	High School #2
June 21-26	High School #1	July 19-24	Junior High #2
July 5-10	5/6th Grade Boys	July 26-31	5/6th Grade Girls

Registration for **families who live within the Diocese of Helena** opens **Jan 5th**. Opens for all other registrants Jan 9th.



**Join us for
Family Camp!**
June 28-30
**Registrations open
March 2nd, 2026**

Camp Rates

Early Bird
(Register before Jan 25th)
\$425
Standard Rate:
\$450

Don't forget to bring your food pantry items for our local charities!

Polson Loaves & Fishes
904 1st St E, Polson

Ronan Bread Basket
10 6th Ave SW, Ronan
(across from St. Luke's Hospital)

Find donation bins at the churches' entrances.



First Sunday of Advent

Entrance Antiphon:

*To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.*

Collect:

*Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever*

Readings:

FIRST READING: Is 2:1-5
RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
R: *Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.*
SECOND READING: Rom 13:11-14
ALLELUIA: *Show us, Lord, your love; and grant us your salvation.*
-Cf. Ps 85:8
GOSPEL: Mt 24:37-44

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor's birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: "He must increase, but I must decrease." (CCC 524)



**Knights of
Columbus**

The Knights of the Columbus would like to offer transportation services to Sunday Mass for parishioners who need assistance. Please call the parish office or John Winegart at (406) 270-6655, if you need help or know of anyone needing help getting to Mass.



PARISH WEBSITE



DIocese of Helena WEBSITE



Download the **myParish app** on your App store or Google Play store on your iOS or Android!



ROSARY GROUP

St. Joseph Hospital Chapel



Fridays at 9:00 am

DIVINE MERCY RADIO
90.7 FM

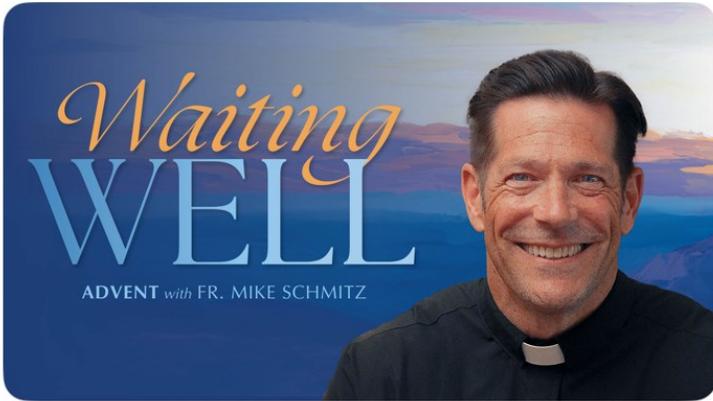


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PO Box 568
Polson, MT 59860



All homilies are available on YouTube and can be found by searching the full name *Fr. Kevin Christofferson.*

It is time to make a plan for the observance of **Advent** so that we can prepare spiritually for the celebration of Christmas!



Waiting Well

Advent with Fr. Mike Schmitz

God wants to shape and mold us during times of waiting, but the problem is...

Instead of waiting, we get worried, anxious, we check out, and we get lost scrolling on our phones.

Fr. Mike wants to help you learn to wait well this Advent, with daily videos in the Ascension App starting November 30, 2025.

Get Prayer Plan
Join Waitlist



Waiting Well is only available on the Ascension app!

7-Day free trial available
Subscriptions are \$9/month or \$60/year

Fr. Mike Schmitz's Sunday homilies can be found for free on YouTube, Hallow, or wherever you get your podcasts!

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CSSM

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
of Montana
Mental Health Services

Call **406-442-4130** or visit www.cssmt.org/mental-health/ to get started today!



Payments to **Immaculate Conception** may be made online at GiveCentral.org (click on the big orange "Find Your Charity" button and type in our zip code, 59860).

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

FUNDING THE MINISTRY OF THE DIOCESE OF HELENA

HABEMUS PAPAM



ACA 2025 PARISH PROGRESS

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	SACRED HEART
20.7%	52.7%
Goal: \$29,700 Committed: \$6,150	Goal: \$9,100 Committed: \$4,800

PRAY as YOU GO PrayAsYouGo.org is a daily online resource that offers guided prayer sessions to help individuals grow in their spiritual life. Each session typically includes scripture, reflective music, and prompts for prayer, making it easy to integrate spiritual reflection into your day. Designed for those on the go, it provides a simple way to stay connected to God amidst daily activities. Whether at home, work, or on the move, Pray As You Go supports deepening your relationship with God through accessible, reflective prayer.



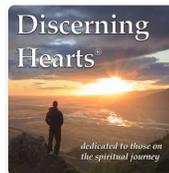
Breviary

PRO TERRA SANCTA

Liturgy. Prayer. Faith.

Hallow

The #1 Catholic Meditation App



Discerning Hearts Catholic Podcasts
Available on your favorite podcast streaming apps!

Parish Offertory Progress Report

Fiscal Year beginning July 1st

Immaculate Conception
\$77,906 of \$183,150 (43%)
Sacred Heart/St. Joseph
\$18,244 of \$48,393 (38%)

I.C. Building Fund Progress:
\$1,350 of \$12,000 (11%)
S.H. Building Fund Progress:
\$1,920 of \$1,349 (142%)



Thank you for your generosity!