

First Sunday of Advent, cycle A – 30 November 2025
Happy New Year but be Prepared!

The beginning of our liturgical year will see a very large selection from the Gospel of Matthew being read each Sunday. But the first two weeks of Advent have the readings reminding us to be prepared and be ready for the end, Jesus' second coming. When I was teaching, this worked very well with the students since the end of the semester was very near. But for us it is still a good reminder to be ready for the end. The last two weeks of Advent give us the immediate preparation as we remember Jesus' first coming into the world.

Many new procedures will be starting up to enhance our liturgical celebrations. First, we will have the lectors now be part of the entrance procession, showing how important the Word of God is to our Mass. If there is no Deacon present the one lector will be carrying in the Book of the Gospel and placing it on the altar. Also, we hope to have four cup bearers at Saint Bernard's and two cup bearers at Saint Irene for folks to receive the precious Blood more easily. After Communion, those who will bring the Holy Eucharist to our homebound parishioners will be commissioned, blessed, and sent forth, ensuring that the homebound receive Communion directly from our Sunday celebration. On the Third Sunday of Advent, we will also joyfully commission 17 new Altar Servers, who will begin serving at our Sunday Masses.

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All registered parishioners of Holy Family and Saint Irene's should have received the Grand Annual appeal letter. The Grand Annual helps greatly in meeting operation expenses and needed repair work at both parishes. Please be as generous as possible to the special collection. Please label your check Grand Annual.

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Finally, my new book; *"Twelve Tough Questions and a Pastor's Response"* has been published on Amazon. This is the book that I wrote during my sabbatical studying at the Vatican in 2024 for three months. May I suggest that it would make a great Christmas present for family members and friends.

Pax Christi,

Fr. Dave O'Leary
Pastor