



## 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“Therefore, stay awake!  
For you do not know  
on which day your  
Lord will come.”  
- Mt 24:42

# ST. MARY’S CATHOLIC CHURCH

SERVING ST. MARY’S/ MALTA, SACRED HEART/ DODSON, ST. FRANCIS /SACO

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025

### Contact Us

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Please check our website for additional information.

Weekly bulletins are posted in full color with several additions – check them out here: <https://www.saintmarysmalta.org/bulletins>

**Confession** – Friday’s 9-10am, Saturday’s 11-noon or contact Fr. Felix directly for an appointment.

**Adoration** – every Friday 9:00-10:00am immediately following daily Mass.

### MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday vigil – Malta 5:00pm    Sunday – Saco 8:30am, Malta 10:30am, Dodson 12:30pm

Daily Mass (Monday thru Friday) – Malta 8:30am

## **Homily by Fr. Felix:**

*First Sunday of Advent (A): Isaiah 2:1–5, Romans 13:11–14, Matthew 24:37–44*

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

Today we begin a new liturgical year, a new Advent. Advent is a sacred season in which the Church calls us to awaken, to watch, and to prepare for the coming of the Lord not only His coming in Bethlehem, but His coming into our lives today, and again in glory. Our readings this Sunday call us to wake up and live as children of the light.

Isaiah gives us a breathtaking vision of hope. He imagines all nations streaming toward the mountain of the Lord, longing to learn God's ways so they may walk in His paths. It's a picture of humanity finally desiring what truly brings peace.

In a world that often feels stuck in conflict, politically, socially, and even within our own hearts, Isaiah's prophecy is refreshing. He speaks of a time when people will beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks: instruments of harm transformed into instruments of life. Isaiah is calling us now to begin walking in God's light, to begin the conversion that leads to peace, to allow the Lord to form our hearts.

In the second reading, Saint Paul speaks with urgency, almost like a spiritual alarm clock. He tells us that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed, and so we must put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Paul invites us to examine the places where we may have grown spiritually sleepy, and to take concrete steps to re-ignite our faith: perhaps through daily prayer, through reconciliation, through acts of charity, through renewed discipline.

In the Gospel, Jesus continues this theme of vigilance, drawing a striking comparison to the days of Noah: People were eating, drinking, marrying, ordinary, everyday activities. There was nothing wrong with those actions themselves. But Jesus' point is that they were so absorbed in daily life that they lost sight of eternity. Their lives were full, but their hearts were unprepared. In our own time, this is maybe the greatest spiritual danger, not hostility to faith, but distraction. We are busy, constantly connected, constantly stimulated, and yet interiorly asleep.

We have information at our fingertips, but little space for silence. We have constant movement, but little interior attentiveness. Jesus tells us, "Stay awake." To stay awake means learning to recognize grace in the present moment. It means allowing Christ to interrupt our routines, to speak to us in our relationships, in our responsibilities, in our moments of suffering, in our celebrations, and in our quiet prayer.

The Advent vigilance challenges us: firstly, to give intentional time for God, even five minutes of quiet prayer a day can soften the heart. Secondly, to examine our lives honestly, where are the habits, resentments or sins that we keep putting off addressing? Thirdly, it is a joyful expectation that the Lord is coming into our hearts, into our families, into our world. And He comes to save, to heal, to make new. Fourthly, it means living differently whose lives point toward God's mountain, people who shine with peace, compassion, forgiveness, and mercy.

May this Advent renew our hearts. May it fill us with hope for the Lord who comes. And may we walk, day by day, in the light of the Lord. Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**MONEY COUNTERS:** We will have trainings on Nov. 30th after mass at 11:30 &/or Dec. 3rd at 5pm. Please contact Joy DePuydt for questions (406) 654-4777

PCCW will host their annual **Christmas Cheer Party**, immediately following Mass on December 7<sup>th</sup>, in the church basement. Each PCCW Band is asked to bring at least 4 dozen homemade cookies or treats. They will assemble cookie trays and deliver them to parishioners in need of a little Christmas Cheer. All ladies are encouraged to attend and share in this fellowship.

December 8<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Day of Obligation, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**,  
Mass at 6:30pm in Malta

December 14<sup>th</sup> after Mass: **RE Christmas Program, Potluck Party, and Church Decorating**. All are invited to come celebrate & decorate with us, we need lots of helping hands.

Annual **"Christmas Cards for Seminarians"** program has been rescheduled to "Easter Cards for Seminarians." Follow for more information to come- starting around Ash Wednesday 2026.

Did you know? There is an excellent **Catholic Funeral Planning Guide** on our website

[www.saintmarysmalta.org/ministries](http://www.saintmarysmalta.org/ministries)

*The documents include information on: steps before death, at the time of death, and after death. The Order of Catholic Funeral Rites explained and an easy "fill in the blank" area to share with loved ones.*

**Week of November 23, 2025 Donations: Malta \$2,494, Saco \$377, Dodson- no count this week**



## Catholic Family Advent Calendar



### Notable Feast Days

- **All 4 Sundays of Advent:** These are not listed on the calendar as fixed dates each year, but we celebrate by lighting a candle on our Advent wreaths each of the four Sundays as we approach Christmas.
- **December 6:** St. Nicholas traditionally gives gifts in many parts of the world, so we are reminded on his feast day to pass it forward to others.
- **December 8:** As the Feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception is a Holy Day of Obligation, we go to Mass to remember this miraculous moment in Our Mother's life.
- **December 9:** St. Juan Diego's feast day reminds us of the surprise he received when Mary showed him where to gather roses (out of season) to deliver to his bishop, as well as with her image as Our Lady of Guadalupe on his tilma upon arrival to the bishop. What fun it would be to surprise someone with your own bouquet of roses in honor of his feast day.
- **December 12:** Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patron saint of the unborn, so we pray and remember to care for the unborn today.
- **December 15:** St. Lucy, whose name means "light," reminds us to be a light in the darkness as she was. Putting up our own Christmas lights or looking at others is a great reminder of this.

### Prayer Requests

*If you have a prayer request, please contact **Dianne Salsbery** at 406-654-4675. Names will be listed in the bulletin for a minimum of 30 days.*

**Please pray for** –The family of Skylia Sisco, Debbie and Joe Nicholson, Leona Kienenberger, the families of Staci French, the family of Norma Wyse, Carletta Benson, Joe Simanton, Judy Henry, Lorena James, Adalyn McCollom, Ramona Kienenberger, Gloria Combs, Corky LaBrie, John Shevlin, Kristi Shettel Peterson, Dianne Salsbery, Bob Kaluza, Tammy Peterson and those from our area serving in the military.

**For the repose of the souls of** – Skylia Sisco, Staci French, Shirley Eklund, Alvina Doucette, Derek Davis, KJ Wilke, Jim Robinson, David Williamson, Lee Stevens and all souls in need and pray also for their families that they find comfort and peace.



*Week one of Advent: HOPE* "Dear Jesus, thank you for being my hope when things feel difficult. This Advent, help me slow down and remember what really matters. Help me prepare my heart to be ready for you on Christmas. I put my hope in you. Amen"

**If you would like to have another Priest perform a service (funeral, wedding, baptism, ect.) in our Parish, please contact Fr. Felix so he may grant his permission.**

**Mass Intentions** - to schedule an intention, please fill out an envelope at the back of the church.

Each intention is \$10.

Saturday 11.29.25	-Michael Fred & Nancy Ereaux Family r/b Cummings
Sunday 11.30.25 10:30 Malta	- For my family r/b Lana Fortin
8:30am Saco	- For Walker, Pittman & Sibley Family r/b Indigo Walker
12:30 Dodson	-For the faithful in our Parish
Monday 12.1.25	For Sue Morrow & the Morrow family r/b Cummings
Tuesday 12.2.25	Repose of Staci French r/b the Howells
Wednesday 12.3.25	For John Barnard & the souls in Purgatory r/b Cummings
Thursday 12.4.25	For all widows & singles r/b Lana Fortin
Friday 12.5.25	For Quentin & Sheridan Fish r/b Cummings
Saturday 12.6.25	For Fr. Felix r/b Regina Webb
Sunday 12.7.25	Repose of Carolyn Morrow r/b the Howells

**Daily Readings for the Week of November 30<sup>th</sup>:**

<b>Sunday:</b>	Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9/Rom 13:11-14/Mt 24:37-44
<b>Monday:</b>	Is 4:2-6/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/Mt 8:5-11
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/Lk 10:21-24
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/Mt 15:29-37
<b>Thursday:</b>	Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a/Mt 7:21, 24-27
<b>Friday:</b>	Is 29:17-24/Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14/Mt 9:27-31
<b>Saturday:</b>	Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8
<b>Next Sunday:</b>	Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 (see 7)/Rom 15:4-9/Mt 3:1-12

**Finance Council members include:**

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**Lance Hould** 406-539-5772, [lanceh\\_99@hotmail.com](mailto:lanceh_99@hotmail.com)

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*Meetings are generally the 3rd Thursday of the month. If interested in serving please contact a member of the finance council.*

**Parish Council members include:**

**Alora Snider**— 399-1675, [alora\\_lynn\\_09@hotmail.com](mailto:alora_lynn_09@hotmail.com)

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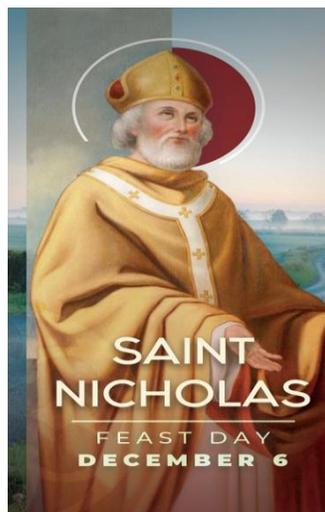
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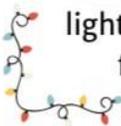
*Nicholas is the patron of sailors and voyagers.*

He did many kind and generous deeds in secret, expecting nothing in return. Symbolizing hope and the magic of giving during the holiday season.



# Catholic Family Advent Calendar



<p>1 Light a candle in church for a special intention</p> 	<p>2 Offer up your struggles for another</p> 	<p>3 Donate toys to a children's charity</p> 	<p>4 Bake cookies for a neighbor</p> 	<p>5 Smile at everyone you meet today</p> 
<p>6 Give a small gift to a friend</p> 	<p>7 Prayer a rosary for someone in need of prayers</p> 	<p>8 Attend Mass for the feast of the Immaculate Conception</p> 	<p>9 Surprise someone with flowers</p> 	<p>10 Decorate a gingerbread house together</p> 
<p>11 Offer to wrap gifts for someone</p> 	<p>12 Donate baby items to a pregnancy center</p> 	<p>13 Offer to do a chore for a family member</p> 	<p>14 Read a book to someone younger than you</p> 	<p>15 Go look at Christmas lights as a family</p> 
<p>16 Pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet as a family</p> 	<p>17 Invite your priest over for dinner</p> 	<p>18 Pray for those who lost loved ones this year</p> 	<p>19 Donate canned goods to a food pantry</p> 	<p>20 Thank God for something you take for granted</p> 
<p>21 Spread some cheer and go Christmas Caroling</p> 	<p>22 Write a thank you note to someone helpful</p> 	<p>23 Donate clothes to those in need</p> 	<p>24 Attend a special Christmas Vigil Mass</p> 	<p>25 Merry Christmas!</p> 

—AN INTRODUCTION FROM BISHOP FLEMING—



Greetings in Christ: At the annual meeting of the Catholic Bishops of the United States, my brother bishops and I issued a special statement on immigration in our country. I invite you to prayerfully read this statement. It is not about politics; it is about the sanctity and dignity of human life. Each and every human being is a beloved child of God, created in God's image.

In His love, peace and joy,

  
Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Fleming  
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings



STATEMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE  
OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON IMMIGRATION

*From the Plenary Assembly in Baltimore - November 12, 2025*

As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity.

Catholic teaching exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants. We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.

We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks. The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and

likeness of God (*Genesis 1:27*). As pastors, we look to Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (*Zechariah 7:10*). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (*2 Corinthians 8:9*), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (*Luke 10:30-37*), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (*Matthew 25*). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (*John 13:34*).

To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (*cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26*). You are not alone!

We note with gratitude that so many of our clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful already accompany and assist immigrants in meeting their basic human needs. We urge all people of good will to continue and expand such efforts.

We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform.

*As disciples of the Lord, we remain  
men and women of hope, and hope does not disappoint!  
(cf. Romans 5:5)*

*May the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe enfold us all  
in her maternal and loving care and draw us ever closer  
to the heart of Christ.*

# Weekly Prayer

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## Sunday's Readings

### First Reading:

O house of Jacob, come,  
let us walk in the light of the LORD! (Isa 2:5)

### Psalm:

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord. (Ps 122)

### Second Reading:

You know the time;  
it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.  
For our salvation is nearer now than when  
we first believed. (Rom 13:11)

### Gospel:

"So too, you also must be prepared,  
for at an hour you do not expect,  
the Son of Man will come." (Mt 24:44)

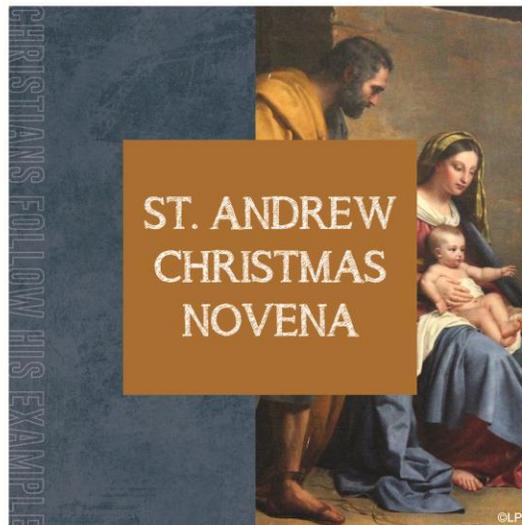
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## Live The Liturgy Inspiration of the Week

"You do not know on which day your Lord will come," Jesus says. He is reminding us that we do not know the mind of God. But we do know the heart of God, and we know that it is filled with mercy for those who heed the warning: Stay awake!

## Observances for the week of November 30, 2025

- Sunday:** 1st Sunday of Advent; Respect Life Sunday  
**Wednesday:** St. Francis Xavier, Priest  
**Thursday:** St. John Damascene, Priest and Doctor of the Church  
**Saturday:** St. Nicholas, Bishop  
**Next Sunday:** 2nd Sunday of Advent



## Devotions, Explained!

The St. Andrew Christmas novena is a prayer said from Nov. 30 through Christmas Eve. St. Andrew was the first disciple of Christ, and in saying this prayer Christians follow his example of prescient faithfulness throughout the days of Advent.

## Prayer for Advent - Arise

Bless God's Holy Name!  
Prepare our hearts for Your coming, Lord.  
Awaken them from any places that have become sleepy or despondent.  
Inspire us with new visions.  
Be with us as we climb closer to You.  
Amen.

# Worship & Meditation

## Readings for the week of November 30, 2025

### Sunday:

Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9/  
Rom 13:11-14/Mt 24:37-44

### Monday:

Is 4:2-6/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/  
Mt 8:5-11

### Tuesday:

Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/  
Lk 10:21-24

### Wednesday:

Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/  
Mt 15:29-37

### Thursday:

Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a/  
Mt 7:21, 24-27

### Friday:

Is 29:17-24/Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14/Mt 9:27-31

### Saturday:

Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/  
Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

### Next Sunday:

Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 (see 7)/  
Rom 15:4-9/Mt 3:1-12



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## Gospel Meditation Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

A few years ago, my house was broken into on Super Bowl Sunday. Turns out, it's a great day for burglars. If the TV isn't on, people are probably watching the game somewhere else, so ... easy pickins'. I'll never forget walking into my bedroom and realizing someone had been there. My stuff was thrown all over the floor. The closet was torn apart. It was disorienting and disturbing — someone had invaded the space I thought was secure. After that, I bought an alarm system. And every Super Bowl Sunday since, I'm extra careful to lock the doors and keep the lights on. That experience made me more alert. Not scared. Just attentive.

That's much like the spiritual place Jesus wants us to be on this first Sunday of Advent. He doesn't start the season with soft candlelight and cozy manger scenes. He starts with two brutal images: a flood and a thief. In other words, chaos and violation.

Why? Because life will flood us. Chaos *will* come. And in the midst of it, Christ will come like a thief — not to steal from us, but to steal us back. He is the intruder we should want. The one who breaks in, not to ransack, but to rescue.

Christ presents himself as the thief but also the new Noah. He builds the ark of the Church to carry us through the flood. And he invites us to join him. How? By participating fully in our parishes. By making our homes places of prayer. By guarding our hearts with truth. By refusing to let spiritual complacency leave us exposed. By repentance.

This Advent, don't just stay vaguely "awake." Prepare. Build. Watch. The flood will come. But so will he.

— *Father John Muir*

# Liturgical Life

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## ( PRACTICING ) CATHOLIC

**Mini Reflection:** Of course the world is ending. It has been ending forever. And the Son of Man is coming — but don't forget, he was already here, too. And His Spirit, even now, is renewing the face of the earth. "But how?" we ask. "And when? And where?"

### **Watershed Moments**

In every life there are watershed moments.

I think of our time on this earth as resembling, in the beginning, a fine, firm sheet of metal, suspended with perfect balance in time and space. If a drop of water falls upon the sheet, it remains precisely where it lands.

But life goes on. We see things, we feel things, and in the seeing and the feeling, the flat, smooth metal sheet is nicked. The impacts created by those experiences are like BB pellets riddling armor; before long, the surface is pockmarked. A falling drop of water will drain or pool either in one way or the other, its action determined by the closest indentation.

A watershed has been created, a summit or valley that disrupts the smooth flatness of life. In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks about the end of the world. I'm no Biblical scholar, but I suspect the topic at hand is the Apocalypse (capital A). The big one. The explosion that upends the sheet itself and sends every drop of water crashing down. But I think, in a smaller way, it's also about all the indentations on the plane: those little apocalypses (lowercase a), the things that felt like the end of the world (or the beginning of a new one).

The loss of a job. The breakup of a relationship. The suffering of a loved one.

Of course the world is ending. It has been ending forever. And the Son of Man is coming — but don't forget, he was already here, too. And his Spirit, even now, is renewing the face of the earth.

"But how?" we ask. "And when? And where?"

Without the chinks in the armor — without the watershed moments — there is tremendous smoothness, certainly. But there is also no movement.

So look to the watershed moments, these little (and big) apocalypses. In these moments that change us, for better or worse, God is there, working, waiting.

— Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

## **Why do we do that?**

### **Catholic Life Explained**

#### **Question:**

When we say the Penitential Act at Mass, why do we strike our chest three times?

#### **Answer:**

Our rituals and liturgical celebrations are filled with a variety of symbols, some of which also relate to our gestures and physical postures (e.g. kneeling, sitting, processing, making the Sign of the Cross). The custom of striking our breast three times during the "I Confess" of the Penitential Act of the Mass is one of those gestures that is loaded with symbolism.

The tradition of Christian's striking the breast (above the heart) is rooted in the image of Sacred Scripture, especially texts like Psalm 51 which speak of a "humbled contrite heart" or how God heals broken hearts, binding up our wounds (see Psalm 147:3). Early Christian writers like Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Jerome also refer to this custom in their writings.

Ultimately, this practice is an expression of our sorrow for those times when we have been guilty of faults and a sign that we are willing to take responsibility for our sins and failings. That we all perform this gesture together is also an act of solidarity, recognizing that none of us, regardless of where we are on our journey of faith, is without fault and the need for grace and forgiveness.



“Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.” - Mt 24:40-42

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## Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

### First Reading:

The prophet Isaiah envisioned a future with no more wars and nations united in belief and worship of Israel's God. What does a world totally at peace look like?

### Second Reading:

Paul encouraged the Romans to live with a sense of urgency in anticipation of their own salvation. What motivates you to live a moral life?

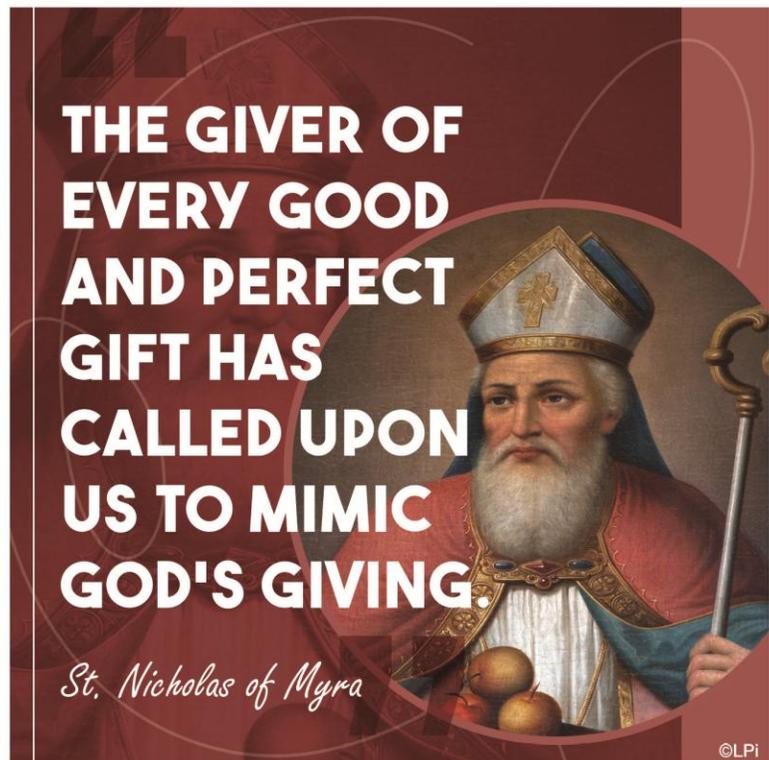
### Gospel:

Jesus taught his disciples that no one knows when the Son of Man will return, so you must always be prepared. How do you plan to use the season of Advent this year to welcome Jesus into your life?



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## Prayer

Dear God, help me to love you and to be ready for Jesus.

## Mission for the Week

Make sure the movies, games, and music you choose help you grow closer to Jesus.

## Sharing the Gospel

Remember that when God told Noah to build an ark, his neighbors laughed at him. Then one day God sent the flood. Only Noah's family was saved because they listened to God, and they were ready. Jesus has already told you that one day he will come back. He wants you to be saved. He wants you to be ready. When you read Bible stories, listen carefully. Love God like Noah did, and learn to do what God asks.

Now color the picture! →

Find and circle the words from today's Gospel:

NOAH  
EATING  
DRINKING

MARRIED  
FLOOD  
TOGETHER

TAKEN  
LEFT  
READY

S	T	B	F	L	O	O	D	E	O
N	O	A	H	N	Y	U	R	M	G
U	G	R	D	O	D	T	K	A	N
O	E	A	T	I	N	G	W	R	H
N	T	Y	A	U	R	L	O	R	L
W	H	I	K	L	C	M	H	I	M
O	E	N	E	R	S	E	V	E	L
D	R	I	N	K	I	N	G	D	E
N	O	W	H	N	T	H	I	E	F
I	S	R	E	A	D	Y	C	O	T

