



DECEMBER 3, 2023 | FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

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ST. THERESA'S

312 Tazewell Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S

160 Merrick Lane
Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S

1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S

1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

One of the Biblical titles for Jesus is "Emmanuel", which means "God with us" (Mt 1:23).

Jesus is the divine Son of God who became flesh and dwelt among us. And he so desired to remain close to us that he gave us the gift of his sacramental presence in the Eucharist. He thus continues to be Emmanuel—God with us—in each and every Mass celebrated throughout the world. We should never take this gift for granted. The most amazing event in the universe takes place at every Mass: the Son of God himself comes upon our altars and dwells in our midst.

—Edward Sri

The Season of Advent

MANY Christians do not understand the season of Advent. People's minds are so dominated by the celebration of Christmas that the term Advent seldom crosses their minds. In the Philippines, Christmas is a long celebration stretching through the "ber" months (September, October, November, December). As early as September, Christmas décors start showing. Houses are decorated with colorful lanterns, Advent wreaths, lights, etc. Of course, there are Christmas carols, Christmas parties and the celebration of *Simbang Gabi* or "dawn Masses" which set a festive and joyful mood. Christmas is such a lengthy observance that the Advent Season is seemed to be disregarded.

In the Church's perspective, Advent is that season of preparation for Christmas. The word advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which literally means "arrival" or "coming into a place". In the liturgical year of the Church, it is the season which precedes Christmas. Advent signifies the season of the year in which we are waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ. It is the time of recalling His first coming when He became man, and the time of looking forward to His second coming to bring about a new heaven and a new earth. Advent is the season which should be distinguished by a particular Christian way of living. During Advent, we should make special efforts to listen to God's word and act on it so that we become better ready for the celebration of Christmas and the final coming of the Lord.

One of the oldest testimonies for a special preparation time before Christmas is from Spain, dating back to 380 AD. In that year, the Council of Saragossa exhorted the faithful to go to church zealously not only during Christmas, but also on the days prior to it. Consequently, many local churches accepted and developed a time of preparation for Christmas.

The Advent season is a four-week preparation which begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve. The Advent season has two parts. The first is from the beginning of Advent to December 16. This part expresses the eschatological character of the season: it makes us look forward to the coming of Christ at the end of time. The second is from December 17 to December 24. This part is more directly concerned with the immediate preparation for the Christmas feast. The liturgical color used during the Advent season is purple to signify its penitential character. The *Gloria* is not sung during the season.



Fr. Renier Supranes

Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, and of longing. This season is an exciting period for we are challenged in so many ways to wake up, to be watchful, to be alert, and to do something in preparation for the coming of the Lord. Advent is not a time for shopping sprees or for business ventures. On the contrary, it is a time to elicit great longing and desire for the Lord. I hope we will concern ourselves with spiritual preparation rather than physical and material arrangements and decorations. Advent is not a time of more spending, but it is a time of more reflecting and meditating about the one we are waiting for, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A blessed season of Advent to us all!

Mark 13:33–37

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be watchful! Be alert!

You do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man traveling abroad.

He leaves home and places his servants in charge,
each with his own work,
and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.

Watch, therefore;

you do not know when the lord of the house is coming,
whether in the evening, or at midnight,
or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

PRIEST ADMINISTRATOR

Fr. Renier Supranes

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(276) 385-7312

OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick** or **Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's

6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's

11:30AM – St. Theresa's

TUESDAY & FRIDAY

10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

Giovanni Antonio Pordenone
(1483–1549), *The Prophet Isaiah* (Detail from St Anne's Chapel, Church of the Annunciation, Cortemaggiore, Italy)

Advent: A Season of Hope

Fr. Harrison Ayre | simplycatholic.com

Advent has a dual focus on Jesus's coming, both in his first coming among us as a man and his coming at the end of time. Although this can, at times, lead to confusion, this twofold approach to the season allows Advent to teach us about God's presence among us. In Advent, we learn that God is the basis of hope, and that such hope is the basis for increasing our love of this life.

Not just a future

Eternity is often thought of as a future goal alone. Thoughts like “when I enter eternal life” or “I look forward to eternity” can reveal attitudes that indicate that we might believe God only to be in our future. What this implies, however, is a loss of the presence of God in the here and now, creating a sense of distance between us and God. With this view, God is no longer close to us and our experience.

But Advent exists to retool or restore our vision. By focusing on the two comings of Christ, the Advent season reminds us that one cannot exist without the other. Eternity is a goal, yes, but it is also present now—albeit seen dimly as though through a mirror (see 1 Cor 13:12). Eternity enters our time and creation in Jesus, elevating all creation into eternity. The liturgy, the sacraments and the Church itself have become the means by which Christ makes himself present to us today—and therefore eternity is also in our midst, though not in its fullness due to the continued fallenness of the world. Where Jesus is, there is eternity, and we know he is not re-

strained to heaven alone. Advent helps us to see with fresh eyes that our eternal goal is already in progress because Christ is here with us. Because of his coming among us as man, eternity is within our grasp.

The foundation of hope

So often we reduce hope to wishful thinking: “I hope I win the lottery” or “I hope this job situation works out,” and so forth. This unfortunate reduction of hope has removed the virtue's central character from Christian consciousness. Hope without a guarantee is just wishful thinking. Hope needs some guarantee if it is to be truly hope.

If eternity is present already in Christ, then hope finds its guarantee in him. We have hope because we already see the effects of Jesus in our lives and in the life of the Church. Hope gives us the ability to see Christ in all, to encounter him in prayer and sacrament, and to hear him in the Scriptures. All this gives our lives an enduring character. Christian hope says life is not fleeting, but rather is enduring because it is united to Jesus's own life. Advent is the training ground of hope—of recognizing God's presence as saving—in the face of whatever is fleeting and passing. Advent is the season of hope.

Increasing our desire

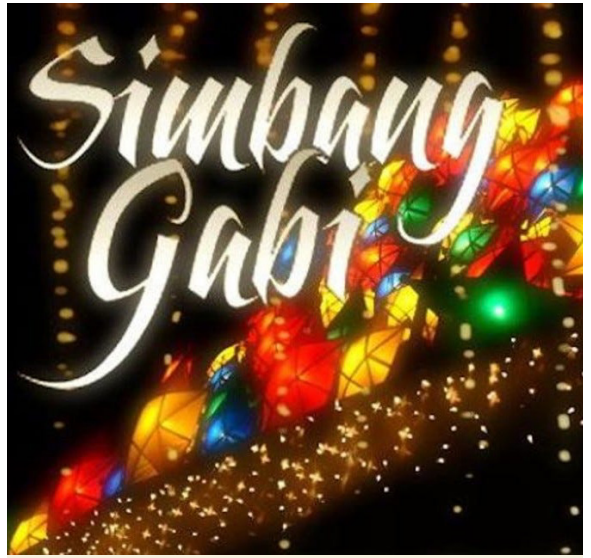
Advent, as a season of hope, helps increase our desire for God. This is done not only by seeing Him as a future goal, but also by seeing him

*“Advent, as a season of hope,
helps increase our desire for God.”*

as someone whom we can encounter today. We meet him and attain our unity with him through the state of life to which he calls us, and through the circumstances of life. God's presence among us becomes clearer to us as we advance in the Christian journey. It is the unfolding of a mystery. And Advent is a time for us to focus on that especially.

This mystery will be revealed when we see God face to face. Heaven is in our midst today through Jesus's presence among us. So if Jesus isn't present to us today—meaning our heavenly goal is unattainable—then Christianity is just a fairy tale, a myth or wishful thinking. But if we look at life not as something to be avoided, but something to be embraced, we find that God is running toward us in Christ's Incarnation, meeting us in our lives in such a way that he draws us into God's own life. And this coming of Christ is what Advent is all about.

In the encounter of God we meet the One who loves us first, we experience his love as something life-giving. When we experience love like this, we cannot help but desire the One who seeks us. Seeing Advent as a time to increase our desire for God, then, we learn to experience Christ as the One who is always coming to meet us, always drawing us to himself. By embracing our vocation, our state of life and the situations of our lives, we also embrace opportunities of encounter with God. Advent, then, is our opportunity to recommit ourselves to encountering him through these things. By turning toward the Lord in this way, we will experience his love for us, which will increase our desire for Him, thereby increasing our hope.



The Basilica of St. Andrew

Roanoke, VA

December 15, 2023, 6PM

Please bring a dish to share.

The “Simbang Gabi” is an ancient and long-treasured religious celebration in Philippine tradition. It is a series of dawn Masses for nine consecutive days before Christmas.

This is a novena to the Blessed Mother, a time of spiritual preparation and purification to welcome and receive the Child Jesus in our midst during the Season of Advent.

Here in the U.S., Filipino immigrants brought with them this beautiful practice. It has planted deep roots in many states like CA, NY, NJ, VA and Chicago, IL. In VA, the bishop of the Diocese of Richmond and the Office of Ethnic Ministries have given Filipinos a strong and unequivocal support to continue this tradition in various churches across the diocese.

mass intentions

Date Intention

12/2 SATURDAY

4PM

6PM

12/3 SUNDAY

9AM

11:30AM

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of November 26 (Week 22)		
CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	OFFERINGS
St. Joseph's	11	\$320
St. Elizabeth's	21	\$645
St. Mary's	13	\$95
St. Theresa's	62	\$1,376
Total	107	\$2,436
Outside Donations		\$1,200
Year to Date Received		\$69,112
Goal		\$62,194
Ahead/Behind Goal		+ \$6,918

OUTSIDE DONATIONS—THANK YOU!!

Richlands donor: \$1,000
Pounding Mill donor: \$200

please pray for

Louise Serreno*
Gerry Hankins
Clarence Moore
Lexi Cox
Sarah Wall
Tammy Bennett
Margaret Wasilewski
Nick Ulate
Frannie & Rayburn Minton
Sue Bailey
Christian Lambert
Shane Neal
Pete Belcher
Lucas Boyd
Ralph Heldreth
Chris Jessie
Leo Brown
Carolina Ferrare
Junior Aiken
Jeanne Hash
Lara Marshall
Carol & Jim Shumate
Andrew Satmary
Christian Marshall
Alice Godin
Bryan Gunter
Michael Beavers
Natalie Dodge
Roger Empson
Dreama Ritter
Chris Lambert
Mary Muncy
Cindy Lambert
Helen Petro

Clinard Coleman
Joan Harrison
Joe & Yvonne Blevins
Kyle Brown
Sarah Walters
Amelia Proffit
Maurice Law
Dennis & Frances Savage
Nancy Jo Testerman
Josh Cornwell
John Shumate
Doug Vance
Russ Hatfield
Connie Pace
Jody Hamilton
Jeanne Ameli
Annette Pike
Everett Neese
Sharon Mullady
Veronica Ross
Skip Reynolds
Danny McNamara
Louie Negroni
Mary Gobble
Karen Hart
The Dalton family
Allen & Melody James
Betty Tabor
Joseph Romeo
Denise Campbell
Flaudean Bolling
Joelle Bolling
Sara Griffith
Chuck Blevins

council members

PARISH COUNCIL:

Tonya Hylton, Frannie Minton, Ralph Shawver, Barbara Jones, Donna Lambert, Maria Farris, Zach Hash

FINANCE COUNCIL:

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Lydia St. Peter

parish news & events

Special Masses in December

Friday, December 8: (Immaculate Conception)	10AM Tazewell 6PM Richlands (<i>food & drink following Mass</i>)
Saturday December 23:	4PM Grundy 6PM Richlands
Sunday, December 24:	11:30AM Tazewell 3PM Pocahontas 6PM Tazewell
Monday, December 25:	9AM Grundy 11AM Richlands

December 30/31 weekend is normal schedule.

January 1 (Mary, Mother of God) schedule to be determined.

"Show us Lord, your love;
and grant us your salvation."
-Ps 85:8

birthdays & anniversaries:

DECEMBER 6: Sandy Hankins | **9:** Greg Deskins, Linda Smith



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