

December 3, 2023

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

# First Sunday of Advent

Is 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7 | 1 Cor 1:3-9 | Mk 13:33-37

## **GROW** AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In a nineteenth-century sermon, St. John Henry Newman wrote of today's Gospel: "[Jesus] mercifully whispers into our ears ... not to share in the general unbelief [around us], not to be carried away by the world but to 'beware, keep alert' and look out for his coming." I love the thought that Jesus is "mercifully whispering" to us. Welcome to Advent! We know that Advent is a time of anticipation and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ, but today's readings also speak to me of training ourselves to be alert for God's presence in the small, everyday moments of our lives. In his Letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes that "[we] are not lacking in any spiritual gift" as we await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are gifted with his grace. Our loving God bestows countless graces on us each day, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can seek ways to be more aware of these graces. Yes, we can be more "alert" to them, but can also be thankful for these small moments of God's presence with us.

## **GO** EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Advent is a season of joyful hope. "I hope I can get my Christmas shopping done in time ... I hope I have time to get my house decorated this weekend." We all have "hopes and dreams" for this time of year, and, God-willing we will be blessed with a truly festive and joyous holiday season with our families. For Catholics, though, this season of "joyful hope" is one that has a much deeper meaning. We long for the return of Christ and our eternal union with him with a hope that is built on the promises of Jesus in the Scriptures. Our hope is not passive, but active. We know that God is always there for us, comforting us in bad times and rejoicing with us in times of happiness. Let us give thanks for our Triune God who desires to be in relationship with us enough that he sent his Son to take on our humanity. And let us silence any noise in our hearts so as to hear Jesus' merciful whisper of encouragement to be on the watch for his coming.

**SING** *People, look east. The time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the guest, is on the way.*

## Church of the Ascension

Saratoga, California

[www.ascensionsaratoga.org](http://www.ascensionsaratoga.org)

408-725-3939

Mass Schedule

(Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p

(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a

Getty Images/Arabella Semenov

## Be Watchful! Be Alert!

Advent is the perfect time to examine our lives and wake up to the urgent call of life within us. Communal reconciliation is available in these weeks to unburden us of some dead wood. The old year is dying; think of old habits that could likewise be put to rest here and now. We may need to make changes so that our significant relationships may be more life-giving. How can we move in that direction, and how might we ask God to “return” as well? Sometimes the movement required is monumental, like leaving situations of abuse or injustice behind. Or facing our addictions and admitting we need outside help. Sometimes the cost of change will be extraordinary. But what is the cost of remaining as we are? -Alice Camille

## Quotes

- “Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.”

- Henri Nouwen

- “Advent: the time to listen for footsteps—you can’t hear footsteps when you’re running yourself.” - Bill McKibben

- “Life in a prison cell may well be compared to Advent; one waits, hopes, and does this, that, or the other - things that are of no real consequence - the door is shut, and can be opened only from the outside.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Letters from Prison* - 1943)

## Iconic Inspiration

December 4

Think of how much sacred images of Jesus, Mary, angels, and the saints—in painting, stained glass, and sculpture—have filled your life and stimulated your spirit. You might have many sacred images throughout your home. Perhaps you can find them in different public places in your city. Our Catholic churches are certainly full of them. Think of how much they inspire and prompt you to momentary prayer, a fleeting lifting of your heart and mind to God as you pass by them, or to long stretches on your knees, deep in conversation. You can partly thank John Damascene, who defended holy images against iconoclasm, a movement in the eighth century that was opposed to the veneration of icons. Treasure the rich imagery of our tradition. - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

## MASS INTENTIONS

|        |     |       |                         |
|--------|-----|-------|-------------------------|
| Dec 02 | Sat | 05 pm | George Chrisman +       |
| Dec 03 | Sun | 07 am | Ram Pak (L)             |
|        |     | 09 am | Erin Braddi (L)         |
|        |     | 11 am | Ruby Welch +            |
| Dec 04 | Mon | 08 am | Fr. Ben Manding +       |
| Dec 06 | Wed | 08 am | Walter Whelan (L)       |
| Dec 07 | Thu | 08 am | Charles Piligian +      |
|        |     | 07 pm | (Immaculate Conception) |
| Dec 08 | Fri | 08 am | (Immaculate Conception) |
| Dec 09 | Sat | 09 am | Mary Rosenberger +      |

## WEEKLY OFFERING - NOV 26

-\$4,365 (baskets: \$3,088; online: \$1,277). Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-Thanksgiving: \$680.

-YTD: \$123,554. Budget: \$143,201. Shortfall: \$19,647.

Thank you for your generous support.

## Welcome Fr. Maurice Igboerika!

My name is Father Maurice Igboerika.

I was born and grew up in southern part of Nigeria, from the Igbo tribe.

I was ordained priest in Nigeria in 2013.

I moved to the USA in 2016, did

masters in theology from Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley. I have served in several parishes in the Diocese of San Jose and Archdiocese of San

Francisco. Presently I am doctoral student of dogmatic theology, and also working as on-call chaplain at Stanford Hospital and part-time chaplain at Pathways Hospice.

I feel glad and blessed to be starting my stay in this beautiful parish community as priest in residence.



## Unveiling the Diocesan Pastoral Plan

You are invited to the Vespers with the unveiling of the Diocese of San Jose’s Pastoral Plan on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 6:00 pm, at Our Lady of La Vang Church, 389 E Santa Clara St, San Jose. Reception to follow.

## Advent Little Blue Book

As you prepare for the coming of Christ, prepare your heart through daily reflections during Advent and Christmas seasons. The Little Blue Book helps you in this preparation. Copies of the Little Blue Book are available in church near the main entrance. A donation is appreciated.

## Special Collection for Retired Religious

December 10

This collection supports nearly 25,000 elderly religious sisters, brothers and religious order priests in the United States. Thank you for your generosity.

## December Calendar

### IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MASS SCHEDULE

-Dec. 7, Thursday, at 7:00pm (Vigil Mass)

-Dec. 8, Friday, at 8:00am (Mass of the Day)

### ADVENT CONFESSIONS

-Dec. 16, Saturday, 9:45am - 10:45am.

### CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

-Dec. 24 (4th Sunday, Advent): 7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am

-Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve): 5:00pm, 8:00 pm

-Dec. 25 (Christmas Day): 7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am.

## Faith Talk Luncheon

Guadalupe Hope Society invites you to the December 8th Rosary & Faith Talk Luncheon on Friday, December 8, at 11:30 am with Fr. Noel Sanvicente, Judicial Vicar for the Diocese of San Jose.

Register to attend either in person at the Santa Maria Hall or by emailing [admin@ghswomenscenter.com](mailto:admin@ghswomenscenter.com) or call 408-447-5433.