

The Work of the People  
*The First Sunday of Advent*

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!" Our sanctuaries and homes ring with these ancient words of invitation and welcome as we embrace the season of Advent. Quieting ourselves, much as the coming of winter stills and quiets the natural world, we seek to prepare a place for Christ to come again and to be born a new – for his coming or "advent" – into our hearts and into our world.

During the Season of Advent, we often hear from the prophets who proclaimed the coming of the Messiah. In today's reading, Isaiah's prayer of lamentation is the cry of the people who believe that God has abandoned them in their distress. The tone of the lament appears to blame God who has allowed them to wander from the ways of God. But God's anger may be justified because the people have been sinful. The passage, however, ends with the statement of hope: "O Lord, you are our father; we are the work of your hands."

At the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul greets the people with the typical salutation of grace and peace. He gives thanks to God for the many gifts bestowed on them, reminding them that their good fortune is rooted in the grace of God. The end of the passage has an advent tone; he reminds them that it is God who will keep them faithful until "the end."

As we begin this new liturgical year, we move into Cycle B of the Readings and hear God's Word from Mark's Gospel. The account we hear today sets the tone for our Advent spirituality: "Be watchful! Be alert!" A brief parable about the master and his servants underlines the urgency of Jesus' message. Just as the servants are to take care of the master's possessions until his return, so too are Jesus' disciples to take care of the gifts entrusted to them by God. Neither the servant nor the disciple knows when the master will return.

The reflection for this Sunday is from Kathleen Norris who is an oblate of St. Benedict and the author of many books.

Advent is my favorite liturgical season, as its readings encompass so much of both the Old and New Testaments. In order to prepare to celebrate the birth of the infant Jesus, we revisit the whole of salvation history. With Isaiah as our guide, we can't go wrong. We journey forth on a highway where even fools can't go astray.

But Advent is also a challenge, as it requires us to begin again. We go to great lengths to attain status as experts, and not beginners. We regard repetition, going back to stories we've heard a thousand times over, as a waste of our precious time. The familiarity of the readings of Advent and Christmas can deaden our hearts.

Maybe that's why today's readings insist that we wake up from our self-absorbed stupor. The Collect asks us to "run forth" towards Christ; Isaiah asks God to return to us with awesome deeds. The psalmist prays to God: "rouse your power, and come to save us." St. Paul reminds us that our job is to wait, not only for the incarnation of Jesus but for his second coming. And in the Gospel Jesus says: "Be watchful! Be alert!"

Advent reminds us that God's ways are not our own. It asks us to take a realistic look at who we are, people in need of God's grace, beginners who must start all over again in this season to be reminded of the good news that is our salvation in Jesus Christ.

### READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is. 2:1-5/Mt. 8:5-11  
Tuesday: Is. 11:1-10/L. 10:21-24  
Wednesday: Is. 25:6-10a/Mt. 15:29-37  
Thursday: Is. 26:1-6/Mt. 7:21, 24-27  
Friday: Gn. 3:9-15, 20/Eph. 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk. 1:26-38  
Saturday: Is. 30:19-21, 23-26/Mt. 9:35; 10:1, 5a, 6-8  
Sunday: Is. 40:1-5, 9-11/2 Pt. 3:8-14/Mk. 1:1-8

### CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Christmas Community Service by the Cambridge Springs Ministerium will be held on Sunday, December 10th at 7:00 pm at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Public is invited. It is suggested carpooling is a good idea.

### RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Another year has passed, and we are again approaching the annual collection for our Retired Religious to be held in parishes on December 9th and 10th. This event has significant benefits for the retired Sisters in our diocese, as well as the over 30,000 retired religious throughout the country.

The Retirement Fund for Religious offers financial support for those Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests who worked for years for little or no stipends. Last year, the people in our diocese contributed \$129,907 to help defray the cost of medication, nursing care, medical equipment, transportation, physical and occupational therapy, and other necessary needs. Your generous gift provides vital support for their ongoing health care.

Senior Religious are a treasure in the Church. Their dedication and hard work laid the foundation for Catholic schools, religious education programs, hospitals, social service agencies and countless other ministries throughout our diocese; many still serve those in need, today. Those who are no longer able to actively serve, support all that is being done through their ministry of prayer.

Some of you may not presently know consecrated men and women, but they have affected your lives through their ministry to your parents and grandparents and through the many organizations now in place due to their foresight and generosity.

I understand you are asked to support many worthy causes. I invite you only to give what you can. Most importantly, please continue to pray for an increase of vocations to the consecrated life and for God's blessing on all our women and men religious. Know you remain in their prayers. Please join me in supporting this year's Retirement Fund for Religious.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL  
Bishop of Erie

### THANK YOU

We wish to thank all those who ordered or helped with our pumpkin roll baking this year. Our total profit was \$1,175.00. Again, thank you.

## WORSHIP

Monday, December 4  
8:00 am + Kristopher Silbaugh  
(Patricia & Sara Chernicky)

Tuesday, December 5  
8:00 am + Richard T. Miller (Jeanne Miller)

Wednesday, December 6  
8:00 am + NO MASS

Thursday, December 7 - AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION  
5:00 PM + Dean Krupski Wilson  
(Joann Jaskiewicz)

Friday, December 8 - THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
5:00 pm + Emily Katherine Mott (Family)

Saturday, December 9  
4:30 pm + Living & Deceased Parishioners

Sunday, December 10  
8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION  
Genung/Hutch/Proudfoot Families  
(Pat & Richard)

9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA  
John Weber (Josie Osiecki)

## PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Sunday, December 3  
After Mass - Faith Formation Class

Monday, December 4  
5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO

Tuesday, December 5  
After Mass - St. Anthony Novena

Thursday, December 7 - AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION  
4:15 - 4:45 pm - Confession

Friday, December 8 - AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA  
4:00 pm - 4:45 pm - Confession

Saturday, December 9 - AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA  
After Mass - Confession

Sunday, December 10 - AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm - Confession

### ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA ALTAR SERVERS

Saturday, December 9 - 4:30 pm  
Payton Leandro

Sunday, December 10 - 9:30 am  
Jesse Mott - Sophia Mott

*"Jesus, help me be aware  
of the ways that you come to me  
this Advent."*

### ST. BERNADETTE MISSION STEWARDSHIP

	11/19/23	11/26/23
Offertory	373.00	438.00
Maintenance		40.00
Candles	23.00	3.00
Catholic Campaign	<u>90.00</u>	<u>10.00</u>
TOTAL	\$486.00	\$491.00

### ADVENT CONFESSIONS

AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION  
Thursday, December 7 - 4:15 - 4:45  
Sunday, December 10 - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA  
Friday, December 8 - 4:00 pm - 4:45 pm  
Tuesday, December 12 - 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Sunday, December 17 - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

### ADVENT LUNCHES

*Wed. Dec. 6 - Christian Missionary Alliance*  
*Wed. Dec. 13 - First Church of God*  
*Wed. Dec. 20 - C.S. Presbyterian Church*

OPLATKI will be available in the Gathering Space.  
Offering is \$2.00.

### ST. ANTHONY'S HAM DINNER

A Ham Dinner will be served in St. Anthony's Parish Center on Monday, December 18 beginning at 5:00 pm until sold out. Dinner includes ham, potatoes, vegetable, roll and butter and cake. Cost is \$7.00. Take out is also available.

### RETREAT

The Erie Diocesan Office for Young Adults is sponsoring a 5-day directed retreat for any person ages 19-35 interested in developing a deeper spiritual life.

The retreat runs from January 3 thru 7. You may find more information at <https://www.eriercd.org/youth/silentretreat.html>

### ST. BERNADETTE MISSION ALTAR ROSARY SOCIETY

The meeting for Tuesday, December 5 has been cancelled.

### ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA STEWARDSHIP

	11/19/23	11/26/23
Offertory	\$828.00	\$1,528.00
Maintenance	267.00	340.00
CSA	240.00	25.00
Campaign Human Dev.	270.00	115.00
Boiler Repair Donation	61.00	100.00
Candles	37.00	34.25
Pumpkin Rolls	1,510.00	135.00
Altar Flowers		30.00
All Saints		10.00
All Souls		10.00
Calendar Lottery	<u>545.00</u>	<u>325.00</u>
TOTAL	\$3,758.00	\$2,652.25

**CHURCH NAME:** ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

**CHURCH NO.:**

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

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