

First Sunday of Advent

December 2, 2007

“You...must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

-Matthew 24:44

Be Prepared

Be prepared. It's that simple. As this Advent season opens before us, the Lord Jesus summons us to stand ready for his coming. At this time of year much of our attention is focused on being prepared for the details that accompany the holiday season. We purchase gifts; we decorate our homes, inside and out; we prepare foods that we eat only during the holidays; we write and send Christmas cards; we attend holiday concerts; we prepare either to welcome family and friends into our homes or arrange for visits to their homes. We really can't escape the details that make up the season. Perhaps this Advent is a time to attend to all those details with a different spin. As we prepare to celebrate the feast of Christmas, why not be deliberate about acknowledging the presence of the Lord as we go about these tasks? The Lord often comes to us in wonderfully surprising ways. Let us be prepared.

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Please remember the following in your prayers:

Michelle Degmetich	Wendy Semon	Margaret Vandergrift	Kay De Prima
Mary Sparks	Harry Thomas	William Henshaw	Rita Arce
Dan Moriarty	Bill Wart	Schuyler Haynes-Binstock	Art & Rosie Velasco
Larry & Ann Davis	Marcia Garcia	Bonnie Thibault	Till Faugh
Paul Ruel	Ken Maraccini	Lorraine DaRosa	Nancy Bird
Judy Rogers	Robert Bataglia	Elaine Stepp	

Readings for the Week

Monday: Is 4:2-6; Mt 8:5-11
Tuesday: Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24
Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a; Mt 15:29-37
Thursday: Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27
Friday: Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31
Saturday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38
Sunday: Is 11:1-10; Ps 72; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12

QUESTION OF THE WEEK: 2 DECEMBER

Theme: *Expectation, Hope, and Preparation*

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44



Adults: As you prepare to re-welcome Christ into your heart while you prepare for Christmas, what does Isaiah call you to do? What does Isaiah call us as a people to do?

Ladies Guild Boutique this weekend!

Saturday 8am-6:30pm

Sunday 8am-1pm

Tree Lighting

The Town of Paradise will be holding a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at the new Paradise Community Park on Black Olive at Pearson on December 2nd at 5:30pm. Our own St. Thomas More children's choir has been asked to help lead some of the singing during the ceremony.

Come join the fun and support our young people!



Daily Prayer for Peace this Advent

Members of the Peace and Justice Committee are inviting parishioners to join them in a daily prayer for peace during the Advent season. This is part of a nationwide effort being promoted by Pax Christi, USA. People are being asked to pray each morning at 9:00am (PST) for five minutes. Any prayer for peace will do but Pax Christi is encouraging the use of prayers which can be found on their website: www.paxchristiusa.org. Click the "Advent 2007" prompt in the upper right hand corner.



Missal reading for December 2nd is located on page 20.

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, December 2

First Sunday of Advent
Coffee and Donuts, Ladies Guild
See's Candy for sale by KOC after all Masses
Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
8:00am-1:00pm Ladies Guild Boutique, main hall

Monday, December 3

Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
11:30am Our Divine Savior, Chico Penance Service, Chico
5:30pm K.O.C. Monday Night Football, main hall
7:00pm Midnight Mass Choir, Church
7:00pm K.O.C. Offers Meeting, small hall

Tuesday, December 4

Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
11:00am Rosary Makers meeting, main hall
1:00pm Psalms Spiritual meeting, small conf. room

Wednesday, December 5

Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
9:30am Mothers and Others, small conf. room
Noon Hot Lunch, main hall
1:00pm 49+ singles, main hall
3:30pm Faith Formation Family Reconciliation Service
7:00pm Joyful Noise Music Practice, church
7:00pm Breath of the Spirit Prayer Group, library
7:00pm Liturgy Board, small conference room

Thursday, December 6

Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
9:15am Legion of Mary, small conf. room
9:15am Scripture Class, small hall
10:30am Priest meeting at Sacred Heart in Red Bluff
7:00pm Scripture Class, small hall
7:00pm RCIA Inquiry, small conf. room

Friday, December 7

Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
9:00am-6:00pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, church
9:30am Intercessory Prayer Group
10:30-Noon Table of Plenty Food Distribution, garage
6:30pm Holy Day of Obligation Vigil Mass Immaculate Conception of the Mary

Saturday, December 8

8:30am Holy Day of Obligation Immaculate Conception of the Mary
Second Collection: Christmas Baskets, Table of Plenty
Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
12:00noon Welcome Mass Bishop Soto, St. John the Baptist Church, Chico

(Weekly Calendar Continued)

Sunday, December 9

Second Sunday of Advent
Second Collection: Christmas Baskets, Table of Plenty
Gift Collection for Children, mothers and others
Christmas Basket Application accepted all day
NO Coffee and Donuts
6:00pm Christmas Carnival

The Movie Golden Compass is Not Like Harry Potter & Should be Avoided

Cybercast News Service:

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights says that, while the upcoming movie, The Golden Compass, may not be anti-religious, the books on which it is based definitely are anti-Catholic and anti-God.

"We're not saying picket this movie, we're saying don't go to it, and certainly don't buy the books as Christmas gifts for your children," said Kiera McCaffrey, for the Catholic League.



The group's objections center not on the film itself, McCaffrey said, but on the now 10-year-old trilogy of books from which The Golden Compass is taken, titled "His Dark Materials."

"The three novels are extremely anti-faith in general, anti-Christian and anti-Catholic in particular, and pro-atheism," McCaffrey told Cybercast News Service. "In each successive book, the anti-God agenda gets progressively stronger."



This man has been on the record for the last 12 years saying things such as, 'I am all for the death of God,' and 'My books are all about killing God,' and 'I am of the Devil's party and I know it,' " McCaffrey said.



Pastor's Note: The movie itself is not objectionable as the offending material in the books has been edited out. What the League fears is that children who see the movie will become interested in the books and this can be very harmful to their faith. The books are very anti-God and anti-religion. We should not do anything that will lead the young to want to read them, at least not before they are prepared for such attacks on their faith.

Father Steven Foppiano

Welcome to Advent!

This weekend we begin the Advent season and celebrate this time until the first Christmas Mass. The season remembers the world before our Messiah was born to us and also reminds us we each will meet Him again when He returns. We should use this time to realize the gift received in Jesus Christ and to prepare for our meeting Him when this life ends.

The symbols of Advent revolve around light versus darkness. Jesus Christ is the light that leads us out of the darkness of sin. His birth gives proof to God's love for us, His sacrifice on the cross is an act of love that frees us from sin and His resurrection leads us from death to life.

Darkness: Darkness represents sin, death, and the lack of a path to follow. Before the birth of Jesus Christ we cannot see the way because our Savior has not yet come.

Light: The Light represents the hope found in Jesus Christ. Sin no longer has a hold on us. We can now see the path to follow. It is a path of repentance, love and conversion that leads to everlasting life. We have been freed from death by our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the way. He is the light that illuminates the path to follow. It is a path He has walked for us. We only need to follow His lead.

Movement from Darkness to Light:

We begin the Mass with the Church darkened for this is our world before the Messiah arrived. The lights come up for Jesus is among us. He has come and we know that He will return. Meanwhile the light has been given to us and we are to carry it in our lives, in how we treat one another and how we live in hope.

The Advent Wreath:

The Advent Wreath contains four candles. Each represents the four Sundays of Advent that lead to Christmas. The pink candle marks the half way point, the purple candles each of the other weeks. We light one each Sunday as we count the weeks gone by, until finally all burn brightly as the light of Jesus grows stronger. At Christmas we may place a large white candle in the center marking that the light of Jesus has arrived and that we may now walk in the light.



The Characters of Advent

The Archangel Gabriel: Gabriel means "Messenger of God." He heralds in the Messianic age as he announces that Mary is to bear the Son of God. It is also Gabriel who speaks to Zachariah regarding the birth of his son, John the Baptist.



Zechariah: This priest of the temple is the father of John the Baptist. Gabriel speaks to him while he is on duty in the temple sanctuary. Because he speaks his doubts at Gabriel's message, he is unable to speak until after his son's birth when he reveals that the baby's name is to be John.

Elizabeth: The wife of Zechariah and mother of John the Baptist, Elizabeth is also the cousin of Mary. When Mary visits both women are pregnant and John kicks in the womb of Elizabeth at being in the presence of Jesus in the womb of Mary. Elizabeth gives us the beginning of the prayer, the Hail Mary.

Mary the Mother of God: Mary is an important figure for it is she who serves as the vessel for Jesus Christ to enter the world. She is chosen by God and accepts God's directives without hesitation.



John the Baptist: John the Baptist looms large because he heralds in the time of Jesus. Although born only a few months before Jesus, His ministry was well established before that of Jesus. He would baptize Jesus and many of His followers would be among the first Christians.

Joseph: The betrothed of Mary, he at first intends to divorce her because of the pregnancy that comes before he has consummated the marriage. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that, instead, the truth is revealed to him in a dream and he takes Mary as his wife and the child Jesus as his son.

King David: It is clear to the Gospel writers that Jesus is born into the lineage of King David. This is important to the Jews and to us for the King of Israel must come from this line, as revealed in the Old Testament.

The Prophet Isaiah: Isaiah is the prophet that most often refers to the coming of Jesus. He is not exclusive in this prophecy but His is the clearest, especially in the reference to the Virgin being with child and the Kingdom of Peace to come.

The Father: In this Advent season we see the Father at work to fulfill His promised salvation. That fulfillment will come in the gift of His Son.

Christ: The Christ has always existed. The Christ is the Word that is the creative power of God in Genesis. Christ is God and is born into the world through Mary but this is not the beginning of the Christ's existence. It is the birth of the ever existent Word in human form.

The Holy Spirit: Jesus is conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that brings forth this miracle of God being born as a human. The Spirit will be fully united with Jesus at His baptism and will be the Lord's gift to us after His ascension. It is the Holy Spirit which brings us to faith today and which enables our celebration of Mass.

Jesus: Jesus is the name given to the child by Mary and Joseph. The name Jesus is often seen as referring to the human nature of our Savior while Christ refers to the divine nature.

Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the uniting of two natures, the divine that always existed and the human born of Mary. As the human nature ushered the divine into the world, so too that human nature is Resurrected with the Divine into the Heavenly Kingdom and remains united with the Christ who is our judge, advocate, and Savior.

The Community: God calls us to community because here, among the People of God, He is most present in the world. While Advent awaits the birth of the Savior and also remembers that He will return, we also know and experience in community that Jesus Christ remains here today. He is among us whenever we believers gather, in the Word we hear, the Sacraments we share and especially in the Eucharist we celebrate and consume. The season points us to a time of His presence in history and to a time of His return in the future; but the reality of our Lord is present here today.

You: All of this occurs and is presented for one reason, you! God's love for you is so great that He gives His only Son for your salvation. Community is important and is the means by which the Lord works but know that God did all of this specifically for you as well.

God has known you since before you were conceived in the womb. All the events that lead to Jesus Christ, His birth, life, death and Resurrection, and all that continues since, are because of God's love for you!

Our community is important and Jesus has called us to it and through it, but you should never forget the fact that He was thinking about you as an individual as well when all of this occurred and continues to occur. Jesus reaches out to you today as well because God continues to love you as God always has and always will.

Father Steven Foppiano

Are We Ready?

Advent begins with us looking to the Kingdom of God coming to its fullness here on earth as it is in heaven. All the readings point to this future. Isaiah speaks of the peace that will reign when all nations come to Jerusalem. The psalm speaks of the joy and prayer we will experience there. Paul warns us that the time is coming sooner than we think and Jesus warns us to not get caught unawares.

The message is clear! We are to turn away from sin and embrace the way of Jesus Christ and the time is already critical. Jesus can return at any time or we could be called before him at any moment. Nobody knows when Jesus will return to lead His Kingdom and nobody knows how long we have in this life. Either end brings us before our Lord. Are we ready for that?



The Kingdom has not come to its fullness but it has begun. It was inaugurated by Jesus Christ and given to His Church to build until He returns. This Kingdom of God is visible in the Church, to the extent that we live in the ways of Jesus Christ. It is not a kingdom of stone but is built with love. It is not visible in its towers and gates but in its love and compassion. That Kingdom is in you. It is visible when we work together and share it with others.

Advent is the time to live this reality and allow the Kingdom of God to come forth in us. Then, when Jesus returns, His throne will be ready and His people glad. The gates will be the love we live and the walls will be our unity. Then we will rejoice in the embracing kingdom of His love.

Father Steven Foppiano

Music Schedule

Sat.	Dec. 2	5pm	Essila
Sun.	Dec. 3	8am	Celestial Strings
		10:30am	Joyful Noise
		5pm	Roebuck
Sat.	Dec. 8	5pm	Essila
Sun.	Dec. 9	8am	Celestial Strings
		10:30am	Marvelous Comrades
		5pm	Roebucks



Fair Trade coffee and chocolates!

Please join us in helping other less fortunate countries have a better way of life by buying fair trade items. Great for gifts!

"Table of Plenty" Food Ministry

This week Table of Plenty is in need of **cereal, peanut butter, pasta, and pasta sauce**. Non-perishable items may be left in the baskets in the vestibule. Thank you for your generosity that enables us to share the love of Christ with those in need.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink...I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me." Matthew 25:35,40

Christmas Food Baskets

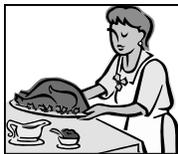
This Christmas our parish will be giving out up to 160 food "baskets" to Ridge families in need. These bags will contain everything needed for a traditional Christmas dinner. Each family will also receive a turkey or ham, and Christmas presents will be included for the children.

A second collection will be taken at all masses the weekend of Dec. 8th & 9th to fund this project. Your donations will allow us to purchase turkeys, hams, and all the trimmings for a Christmas dinner. If you prefer to donate actual food items, **stuffing, olives, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, cake mixes, frosting, and gravy packets** are needed.

Applications for the Christmas food baskets will be available in the church office lobby December 3rd-14th. If you or someone you know could use help with a Christmas dinner, please come in and fill out an application no later than December 14th.

Thanksgiving Thanks

152 Thanksgiving food baskets were given out last week. Thanks to all the generous donations, over 500 people enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving meal from our parish. Special thanks go out to the members of the youth group for helping with the distribution. As always, we appreciate all their hard work.



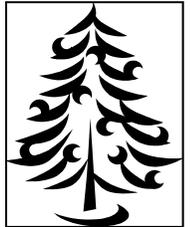
Time is running out! Please call the office for your appointment

to have your picture taken. You will receive a free 8"x 10" portrait as well as a free parish directory. Your participation also helps the parish to get more pages to display our activities and ministries. There is no hard sell and no obligation to buy anything.

The final two days are: **Friday, December 7th**, from **3:00 pm to 9:30 pm** and on **Saturday, December 8th**, from **10:00 am to 5:00 pm**. Please contact the office as soon as possible as appointment times are being filled in.

Gifts for Kids

The tags on the tree in the vestibule are for children whose families will be receiving Christmas food baskets from our parish. If you wish to provide a gift for a child in need, choose a tag off the tree. Please buy a present with an approximate value of \$10 (This will ensure that children of the same family do not receive disproportionate gifts). Return the unwrapped gift, with the tag attached, to the box in the vestibule no later than December 16th. Thank you for helping to make a child's Christmas brighter.



Sacrificial Donations

November 24-25, 2007

Sunday Collections	\$	4,049.00
Thanksgiving Baskets	\$	212.00
Table of Plenty	\$	1,145.00
Building Maintenance	\$	110.00
	\$	5,516.00

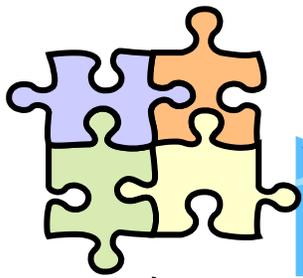
Thank you for your generosity!

Daily Mass Intentions

December 1 - 9, 2007

Sat.	8:30am	Gay Rodrigues †
	5:00pm	Leo and Gertrude Valentine Anniversary
Sun.	8:00am	People of St. Thomas More
	10:30am	Alfred Ulibarri †
	5:00pm	Mark Acuna †
Mon.	8:30am	Intentions of Carmen Galbraith
Tue.	8:30am	Intentions of Lloyd Cain Family
Wed.	8:30am	Ginger Gonzales †
Thur.	8:30am	Don Shelburne †
Fri.	8:30am	Jack Asti †
	6:30pm	Gay Rodrigues †
Sat.	8:30am	Dorothy Hanlon †
	5:00pm	Intentions of Jean Pergande
Sun.	8:00am	Intentions of Jean Pergande
	10:30am	People of St. Thomas More
	5:00pm	Kimberly Mc Gregor †

† Denotes deceased †



Volume III

Issue 5

"Therefore, stay awake!"

ROCK At-A-Glance

Saturday, 1 December
10am — Faith Formation
FIRST RECONCILIATION!
2nd Graders/Families arrive
to church at 9:45am!

Sunday, 2 December
1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10:30am — Children's Liturgy
2:30pm — The ROCK
Grades 9-12
5pm — ROCK...the Liturgy!
RITE OF ACCEPTANCE!

Monday, 3 December
6:30pm — The ROCK
Grades 7-12

Tuesday, 4 December
RCIC — Time Change!!!
5:30-6:30pm

Wednesday, 5 December
3:30-4:45
**FAITH FORMATION
RECONCILIATION SERVICE**
All welcome to participate!

Thursday, 6 December
The ROCK
Grades 6-8
**HAPPY BIRTHDAY WHITNEY
HAPPY BIRTHDAY AUSTIN**

Friday, 7 December
Vigil of Feast of the Immaculate
Conception of Mary
Mass @ 6:30pm

Saturday, 8 December
Feast of the Immaculate
Conception of Mary
Holy Day of Obligation
Mass at 8:30am ONLY!
(n.b. 5pm Saturday counts for
Sunday Mass!)

Got questions about Youth
Ministry at St. Thomas More?
Contact Colleen at 877.4554
colleen@stmparadise.com

RITE OF ACCEPTANCE



The following young people have come forward to participate in the Rite of Acceptance this Sunday at 5pm Mass.

**ASTREA ROEBUCK
CHRIS YOUNG
KRYSTLE YOUNG**

Our community both accepts with great love — and welcomes with great joy in this season of Advent — these catechumens and candidate who are seeking and preparing for sacraments in the church. We will continue to pray for and openly support these young people, their families, and their catechist Elena Stephens as they continue to walk forward in their personal journeys of faith! Congratulations! We know you are MORE — St. Thomas More!

FIRST RECONCILIATION



Congratulations and continued prayers go out to the following 2nd Grade Faith Formation children who made their Sacrament of First Reconciliation this weekend! We are SO proud of you! And we can't wait until your next big step in the Spring — First Holy Eucharist!

**Noah Ballard Monica Campbell
Anthony Lindsey Angelene Maguire
Pedro Marks Evan Salas
Natalie Lewandowski**

Congratulations and thanks also to the Faith Formation Team of Elaine Helmick and Daniel Essila — and especially the families and friends of these children!

Random Thoughts...on my last trip to Starbucks I noticed their Advent Calendars (tree-shaped with chocolates inside) have many different symbols on the doors one opens each day. The symbol on December 1st is clearly a crown. I smiled to myself as I considered that although Advent officially begins at the Vigil Mass this Saturday, 1 December, that "technically" until then we are still celebrating the Feast of Christ the King. I chuckled that a gigantic corporate consumer-driven business in their attempt to appeal to the Christian market through their products actually sort of accidentally got it right. This Advent Season we are challenged to look for Jesus in unlikely places...maybe even Starbucks.

SECRET ANGELS NEEDED to help supply Polaroid film for Christmas Carnival on 12/9!!! Please contact Colleen at 877-4554 if you can arrange to donate some film for our instant cameras!!!

WE ARE STILL SEEKING PRAYER SPONSORS for our 10 children and young people preparing for sacraments this year! Please contact Colleen at 877-4554 to be assigned someone to pray for!

QUESTION OF THE WEEK: 2 DECEMBER

Theme: *Expectation, Hope, and Preparation*

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5
Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14
Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

Adults: As you prepare to re-welcome Christ into your heart while you prepare for Christmas, what does Isaiah call you to do? What does Isaiah call us as a people to do?

Young People: The Gospel tells us we don't know when the Son of Man will return. If he were to arrive today, would you be ready for him? What is one thing you can do during Advent to prepare for his coming?

Children: What can you do to be ready for God to come into your heart and your life?



**TO ALL YOUTH MINISTRY TEAMS!!!
CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL!!!
SUNDAY, 9 DECEMBER!!!
WEAR BTS SHIRTS!!!
TEAM ARRIVES TO BASE-
MENT AT 2:30PM!!! WE
ARE ADJUSTING OUR
REGULAR SUNDAY MTG.!**



FAITH FORMATION STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Don't forget about upcoming dates:
5 December — Reconciliation Service
12 December — Faith Formation
14 December — Choir Rehearsal
19 December — Faith Formation
21 December — Choir Rehearsal
24 December — 5pm Family Vigil Mass

We are still seeking more Faith Formation team members - remember - we're a flock! We continue to pray that those still discerning their call will continue to come forward. Our community honors our personal Baptismal promises as well as those of the families and children in our community when we do more than contribute - when we really commit - to developing our faith community by being heralds of the Gospel! Please contact Colleen to find out more about being part of a fun, diverse, dedicated, and hardworking ministry! 877-4454! Thx!

See's Candies sold by Knight of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus will be taking orders and selling See's Candy after all Sunday Masses.

The proceeds are used to award scholarships to young people heading to college.

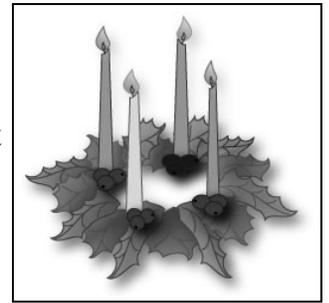


Lessons & Carols at the Newman Center

Please join us for Lessons & Carols, evening of Scripture readings and Advent Hymns at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center on Saturday, December 15th, at 7:00pm. This is a wonderful way to enter into the Advent Season.



Following the Advent service, dessert, eggnog & hot chocolate will be served in the Newman Hall. All are welcome!



For more information please call 342.5180

BELLA at the Pageant Theater

This winner of the Toronto International Film Festival's People's Choice Award, this delightful, people pleaser has been highly requested here in Chico.

In Alejandro Monteverde's emotional tale of self-discovery, two people whose lives are changed forever discover that sometimes it takes losing it all to finally appreciate the things that truly matter.

BELLA is a heartwarming love story that goes deeper than romance and celebrates life, relationships and our capacity for love in the face of the unexpected. You're gonna love it!



This movie is rated PG-13, runs 91 minutes long and opens on December 7th. Please call the theater at 343.0663 for movie times.