

Our Lady of



Grace

Catholic Parish



595 East Main Street • Avon Park, Florida 33825

Parish Office (863) 453-4757

1st Sunday of Advent

November 30, 2025

Parish Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Fr. Ronnie Sison
Pastor

Schedule of Masses

Saturday Confession

3:30 PM English
6:30 PM Spanish

Vigil Mass

4 PM English
7 PM Spanish

Sunday

8 AM and 10:30 AM

Holy Days

Vigil Mass 6:30 PM
8 & 10:30 AM

Daily Mass

Tuesday-Friday
8 AM

First Friday

Mass and Holy Hour
8 AM

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Be ready,
for the Son of
Man is coming
at an hour you
do not expect.

Matthew 24:44



First Sunday of Advent

The Advent message is clear: *“Be awake!” “Be aware!”* Do not let the *“shop ‘til you drop’* mantra distract us from the *“disguises”* Jesus takes on as we prepare for his coming this Christmas.



“Stay awake... for an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come”

Advent begins a new Liturgical Year. The word Advent comes from a Latin word which means “coming,” referring to the coming of Jesus. **There are a series of “comings.”** There was the original **historical coming, 2000 years ago.** There is the “coming” at the end of the world – normally referred to as the **“2nd coming.”** Advent is a “remote preparation for that coming.” **Advent is an “immediate” preparation for the coming of Christ - “Now.!”**

How?

An old Hasidic tale will help us to understand what Matthew is referring to when he admonishes us to **“be aware”** and **“to be awake”** now. The Tale goes: **a Rabbi asked his students: “How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?”** One of the Rabbi’s students suggested: “When from a distance you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?” “No,” was the answer of the Rabbi. “Is it when one can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine?” asked a second student. “No,” the Rabbi said. “Please tell us the answer then,” said the students. “It is, then,” said the wise teacher, “when you can look into the face of another human being and you have enough light in you to recognize your brother or your sister. Until then, it is night, and darkness is still with us.” (*Finding My Way Home, Henri J.M. Nouwen*).

Some commentators have said that **the Catholic Church is a kind of Rip Van Winkle**, a kind of sleeping giant, at least **“sleep walking.”** In the preceding verses to today’s Gospel, we hear Jesus say, **“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.”** This is the way things were before Jesus, the Messiah and Savior was born and entered human history 2,000 years ago.

Where do we encounter Jesus now?

If we look deeper, we will **“see”** his face in many different *disguises*.

Listen to **St. Thomas Aquinas**: *“Godhead here in hiding whom I adore, masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more...”*

Gerald Manley Hopkins, commenting on & developing the phrase ‘**God here in hiding.... here**’ stated, *“Christ plays in ten thousand places, Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his....”*

Matthew’s Gospel names many of those disguises, like: *“I was hungry...thirsty...naked...in prison...sick...a stranger...as long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me.”*

The Advent message is clear: **“Be awake!” “Be aware!”** Do not let the **“shop ‘til you drop”** mantra distract us from the **“disguises”** Jesus takes on as we prepare for his coming this Christmas.





THE ADVENT WREATHS

Traditionally, Advent wreaths are constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which four candles are inserted, representing the **four weeks of Advent**. Ideally, three candles are purple and one is rose, but white candles can also be used.

The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time. **The rose candle** is lit on the third

Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of his second coming to judge the living and the dead.

The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent

(or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent)

When the blessing of the Advent Wreath is celebrated **in the home**, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another member of the family.

Blessing of an Advent Wreath

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response (R/.) Who made heaven and earth?

Reading: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils... For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, and Prince of peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do that." (**Is 9: 1-6**). **Reader:** The Word of the Lord. **R/.** Thanks be to God.



With hands joined, the leader prays

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Savior of every nation. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation? May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R/.** Amen.

The blessing may conclude with a verse from **"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**



The Knights of Columbus Meetings & Special Events

The Knights of Columbus meet on the **2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00 P.M.** in the Youth Center.

The K of C have a Social Meeting with a **Pot-Luck-Supper on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 6:00 P.M. in the Grogan Center.** All are welcome.



OLG Ladies Guild Christmas Luncheon Meeting

OLG Ladies monthly meeting for December will be the **Christmas Luncheon meeting on Wednesday, Dec 9th, at 1:00 P.M.**

The Luncheon is in Grogan Center.

Social hour at noon is prior to our 1 pm Luncheon meeting. **The Social hour** is an opportunity for new or returning members to get to know one another before the **general business meeting at 1:00 P.M.** Enjoy an afternoon of community and fellowship.

The 1st event of the year was the successful **International Food Festival, on Sunday, November 9, in the Grogan Center.**



St Nicholas & Gift-giving – Feast, Sat, Dec 6th

Some hold that the practice of Christmas gift-giving goes back to the birth of Jesus, when the **Magi** brought gifts of **Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh** to the stable at Bethlehem.

Others, hold that the practice of gift-giving goes back to **St. Nicholas** – whose feast day is **December 6** – it goes back to the **5th century**, when he was **Bishop of Myra** in contemporary Turkey.

He came from a **wealthy family** in which his parents died when he was very young. He inherited his parent's wealth. Despite inheriting his parent's wealth, **he decided to become a priest and was later appointed a Bishop.** He used all of his wealth to help those who were most in need.

In our time, the practice of gift-giving has been taken over by **secular commercial concerns**, which see it as an opportunity to make a lot of money.

Like St. Nicholas, we can keep the true spirit of gift-giving at Christmas time, by giving to those who are in need. It is in that spirit that we invite you to bring **"Gift-Cards,"** place them on the Jesse Tree, or, place them in the box under the Jesse Tree. We will distribute the gifts to families in need for Christmas.

[illegible]

La celebración de un cumpleaños siempre es ocasión de alegría, de dar gracias a Dios por las bendiciones recibidas, y celebrar con los seres queridos. En pocos días celebraremos el nacimiento del Niño Jesús, ocasión para tener estas disposiciones y reunirnos en familia a festejar a quien es nuestro Reconciliador.

Aquí algunas recomendaciones:

- 1.** Viva el Adviento como el dulce tiempo de espera de Jesús, encendiendo semanalmente las velas, que indican que ya se acerca.
- 2.** Pongamos el pesebre en casa. Al contemplar en el pesebre a Jesús, María y José, encontramos un modelo para toda familia.
- 3.** Arme el árbol de Navidad con adornos y luces para recordar que Jesús es la ‘Luz del Mundo’.
- 4.** En Nochebuena trate de asistir con su familia a la Misa. De esa manera no sólo celebrará a Jesús, sino que podrá recibirlo en la Eucaristía.
- 5.** Aprovechar las tradiciones como las posadas o pastorelas.
- 6.** Los regalos son expresión de la alegría de la Navidad. Si los tenemos, disfrutémolos, pero recordemos que no son lo central, lo más importante es que Jesús viene a nuestros corazones.
- 7.** Podemos adoptar una familia que pasa necesidad, preparando una canasta con alimentos

básicos y obsequios para que puedan celebrar una Navidad digna.

- 8.** Recolectar juguetes para entregárselos a niños de escasos recursos.
- 9.** Celebrar el cumpleaños del Niño Jesús. Prepare un bizcocho dedicado a Jesús y canten las Mañanitas o Feliz Cumpleaños.
- 10.** Cantar o escuchar villancicos.

Son muchos los medios que podemos poner para celebrar bien la Navidad. Pero lo más importante es tener el corazón bien dispuesto, abierto y agradecido, para encontrarnos con el Niñito Jesús que nace por amor, y que quiere poner su morada en cada uno de nosotros.



**PROGRAMA
DE EDUCATION RELIGIOSA
Prekínder – Grado 12**

Preguntas/Información
Mayra Donan (863) 453-7537

ADULTOS

Florentino Perada (863) 840-4533

NOS TOMAMOS UN RECESO

GRUPO DE ORACIÓN y JUAN XXIII
Estarán en receso hasta jueves enero 8, 2026.

MASS INTENTIONS**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29**

- 8:00 a.m. + Fr. Leo Frechette & + Fr. Gerald Grogan.
 4:00 p.m. + John & Greg Kilpatrick by Evelyn Seely.
 7:00 p.m. + Marie Rosaire Dure Jean-Baptiste by Benita Toussaint.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 30

- 8:00 a.m. + Treva Magnuson by Ronald Magnuson.
 10:30 a.m. + Penny Irilli by Frank Irilli.

MONDAY DECEMBER 1

- 8:00 a.m. No Mass.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 2

- 8:00 a.m. + Helen Ryde by Amedeo Schiappa.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3

- 8:00 a.m. + Vicky Kellner by Paul & Justine Devlin.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 4

- 8:00 a.m. + Jennifeer Mason by Dick & Connie Mason.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 5

- 8:00 a.m. + Joan, Neal & Tim Roche by Family.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6

- 8:00 a.m. For Our Parish Family.
 4:00 p.m. Deb Grant by Randy Rhodes.
 7:00 p.m. + Alfredo Morfin by Family.

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

The Highlands County Genealogical Society will meet on Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. in the Religious Education Building. All are welcome to learn about their family tree.

2026 MISSALS

The 2026 Missals are available in the Parish Office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Missals are \$5.00 each.

FOR THE SICK OF THE PARISH

Joan Morgan	Candida Reyes	Kathy Furtado
Rosa Arosemena	Andres Clavijo	Jade Jackson
Martha Clavijo	Harold Raccine	Carol Krause
Donna Skelly	Roger Brelinski	Jean Rapp
Rosemary Melinson	Cameron Prosperi	Joan Bender
Deb Perry	Martha Spung	Louise Schorsch
Donald Schorsch	Ed Carrigan	Joey Prescott
Michael Rand	Bea Pedara	Marty Worley
Sharon Ingalls	Gary Ingalls	Dennis Hood
Susan Beaudoin	Amy Slane	Jeff Babbitt
Rose Brault	Waylen James	Raffael Aversa
Jerry Grinkiewicz	Kim Nuccio	Sherry
Jeannie Stopa	Jim Stopa	Marie Burley
Rick Burley	Ron Maslyk	Kathy Reisert
Clay Gooch	Janice Vreeland	

And for those who care for the sick, for the deceased member's and benefactors of the parish, and for our loved ones.

RESPECT LIFE MONTH

October is Respect Life Month, and the Choices FRC annual fundraising campaign is underway. The Knights of Columbus will be passing out baby bottles after mass beginning October 18th in support of this campaign. You can fill the bottles with coins, bills or checks made out to Knights of Columbus. Please be generous and return the baby bottles by November 30, 2025.

FUNDRAISER

The Religious Education Program are taking pre-orders for Poinsettia for the holidays. Flowers must be pre-ordered. Forms are available at the Church or office. Orders will be taken from November 8 thru November 30, 2025. Pick up will be on Sunday, December 7, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon.

For more information, please call Mayra Donan @863-214-3025 or 863-453-4757.



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President

Betty Anne Lee
863-873-7176



Here is a reflection, poetic prayer, & a description for Mk 13: 32–36: Be prepared for God's return



Jesus said to his disciples: “**Be watchful! Be alert!...**

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 & find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: ‘**Watch!**’”

Heavenward Reflection: The Unknown Hour

Time is not ours—
it is God's alone to reveal.
We do not wait in fear,
but in faith, with fire in our lamps,
and oil in reserve.
Each moment is holy.
Each task is sacred.
Each heartbeat a beat of the Master's drum
as we labor and look up.
Let us not slumber
in the lull of this passing world,
but awaken our hearts to the hour
that approaches unseen—
like the whisper of wind,
like the flap of angel wings
that stir just before He comes.

Prayer: A Servant's Watch

Lord God Almighty,
Keeper of time and Giver of grace,
May I never be lulled into sleep
by comfort, distraction, or delay.
Make my heart alert,
my hands diligent,
my eyes wide with wonder.
You are the Master of the house,
and I, Your servant,
long to be found faithful when You return.
Even if You tarry, I shall watch.
Even if You delay, I shall work.
Even if darkness surrounds, I shall believe.
Come, Lord Jesus.
I will not sleep through the moment You arrive. Amen.



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