## St. Bonaventure Religious Ed

**Remote Lesson 3**

**Sunday Nov. 29th** ~ First Sunday of Advent

Patient, watchful anticipation

**Preface to this week’s lesson:**

The season of Advent begins this Sunday, several weeks before Christmas. Advent is part of the Christian year, a season of sustained focus on particular aspects of spiritual formation. It is a season that points to Christmas and the joy it promises.

Advent can seem a little strange to those unfamiliar with its traditions, themes, and prayers. Is it merely a historical exercise to pray the prayers of ancient Israel as they longed for the birth of their savior? Jesus has already come, hasn’t he? Most of us like Christmas; after all, it’s kind of like an extended birthday party for Jesus where we get the presents. But why spend weeks “anticipating” the birth of someone who’s already been born?

The answer to this question draws us into the central purpose of Advent and the kind of spiritual formation we undergo when we celebrate it. At the core of Advent’s purpose is the discipline of ***patient, watchful anticipation***. In the season of Advent, we train ourselves for watching and waiting.

Most of us these days are pretty lousy at waiting. We live in a world whose entire modern economy is based on shrinking the space between feeling a desire and satisfying it. We expect our food to come quickly(drive through restaurants), the weekends can’t get here fast enough, we binge watch entire seasons of TV shows in a few nights, and even a few seconds of delay can cause us to abandon a web search in disgust. We want what we want, and we want it now!

Even when our desires are good and holy, we are impatient for their satisfaction. We look around at our world and can clearly see its brokenness. Whether we look inside ourselves, at the lives of our family, friends, and neighbors, or at what’s happening in the wider world, we see the truth of Paul’s words: *“the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of* *childbirth right up to the present time.”* (Romans 8) The world is not right. This world is not as it should be. God himself has told us that this is so, and very long ago he began working to do something about it. He has been at work, and is still at work—but that work is not yet finished. There is nothing we can do to speed it along, it will come in the time and measure chosen by God. We wait.

Waiting may seem like doing nothing, but a moment’s reflection reveals that waiting is actually hard work. We groan, aching for what we need to finally come to pass. And waiting for God to finish his work is a little like pregnancy: there is preparation to do, but most of the work doesn’t come from us; we must simply wait, and the expectation and eager need make the waiting feel like a kind of work, an active, watchful, restrained patience.

This waiting is fruitful. It enlarges our capacity to receive and enter the joy of Christmas. It right-sizes our perspective on our own efforts toward sanctification as we walk with God and submit to his rule. It widens our ability to experience joy even while we patiently endure trials, knowing that the day is surely coming when we will pass beyond the trial. It opens our eyes to see God’s promises fulfilled in ways we might miss were it not for a new alertness borne of the Holy Spirit, borne of waiting.

Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. Mark 13:33

* **Begin this week’s lesson by praying as a family the family prayer of Advent:**

**Dear Father, we are watching and waiting for Christmas when we**

**celebrate the day that you sent your son, Jesus, to earth. We are also**

**waiting for him to come again. Help us to be ready.**

**In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen**

* **Read this week’s Gospel with your family**

**Gospel**  [**Mark 13:33-37**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/13?33)

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!’”

* **Complete the lessons as a family or individually, then share what you have learned.**
* **Each lesson, activity or video is geared to age levels.** *(RED - younger kids, BLUE – older elementary to HS, GREEN – adults or adult supervision to explain.)*

Lessons:

htps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pxPALw2abo Intro to Advent with Brother Francis (4:14mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dlA> What is Advent? (2 mins) For whole family parents will need to read to young children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA-gx-PWB0A> Advent: More than a chocolate calendar w/Fr. Mike Schmitz (6:25)

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:  Make an Advent Wreath**

**What you will need:**

3 - **Purple** Candles (1 for each Sunday of Advent)

1- **Pink** Candle (4th Sunday of Advent)



1 - **White** Candle *(in the middle for Christmas Day, birth of Jesus)*

1 - Pine Wreath or any other decoration you want to use.

5 - Candle Holders if using taper candles

**Instructions:**

* Form the wreath on a stable surface
* Place the 1 pink and 3 purple candles in a circle
* Place the white candle in the middle

## **Advent Candle Names**

Each candle has a specific meaning related to the birth of Christ.

### **The Prophecy Candle**

The *first purple* candle is the Prophecy Candle symbolizes hope and God's forgiveness toward man. It also can symbolize the expectation of the coming of the Messiah. This candle is lit the first Sunday of Advent.

### **The Bethlehem Candle**

The *second purple* candle symbolizes faith and reminds Catholics about the experience of Joseph and Mary in the city of Bethlehem. This candle is lit the second Sunday of Advent.

### **The Shepherd's Candle**

The *third candle which is pink*, represents Gaudete Sunday and the joy that the birth of Christ brought to the world. Traditionally, on Gaudete Sunday one takes a break from Advent fasting to experience the joy of the day.

### **The Angel's Candle**

The *last purple* candle is the Angel's Candle and represents the peace and justice that the angels and Christ brings to the world. It also can represent purity.

### **The Christ Candle**

A **white candle** in the middle of the wreath is included, this candle is lit on Christmas Day to represent the birth of Jesus and purity. The Christ Candle is lit every night until the Feast of the Epiphany, which is twelve days from Christmas.

**Lesson for High School and Confirmation Students**

* **Read the introduction and the email then discuss the questions with your parents.**

Yes, we know there was no such thing as e-mail back then. It’s unlikely that Mary called Elizabeth “Girl,” and who even knows the name of Herod’s guard? Certain aspects of this wonderful and beautiful story have been “tweaked” for dramatic purposes. Our goal is to look deeper into the story, to wonder what these people may have been thinking. We want to help you see the birth of the Christ child as if it were happening for the first time. As you read this email experience the joy and awe as they did so long ago on the first Christmas.

To: Elizabeth

From: Mary

Hey, Girl!

You’ll never guess what happened to me, not in a million years. I was going tell you all about it when I saw you, but I just can’t wait.  It has been a wonderful and horrible time. Joseph has told my father that there will be no wedding. That’s the horrible part. Now let me tell you about the other.

Mother sent me to the well, just as she does every morning. I keep telling her that Rachel is old enough to fetch the water now, but Mother sends me.

Do you remember when we were little girls and Mother used to say we had to be good, we had to be pure and kind — that maybe someday God might send the Messiah; and if we weren’t good girls then God would go and look somewhere else? We laughed at her.

Lizzie, it happened.

God sent an angel to me. He was wonderful, Lizzie, just wonderful. At first, he was as tall as the temple. A giant. Then, I think he saw how scared I was and suddenly he was the size of any man, taller than Father, but not as tall as Joseph.

He was dressed all in white and had wings like a bird that he just seemed to fold behind him. I thought I was being punished, but he was smiling. He had the kindest smile, and Lizzie he smelled like sugar. Remember Deborah’s mother? She used to make those cakes with the sugar and honey and pour cream on them for us? That’s what angels smell like.

He looked at me — and I’m not making this up — he looked at me like he was admiring me, like I had done something so wonderful to make an angel proud. He said God loves me. He said that God had decided that I was going to bring the Messiah into the world. He said that I was the one. Then he told me I was pregnant.

Lizzie, I can’t begin to tell you what that was like.

I told him he had the wrong girl. I love Joseph, but he and I had never…well, you know.

The angel said I was pregnant and that the father was the Holy Spirit.

Lizzie, at that moment I felt the baby inside of me. I knew what the angel said was true, and there was a light all around both of us.  It was like I could taste that light, feel it with my fingers. I could feel that light inside of me. I knew what he said was true.

Lizzie, it’s me. I’m the one. I will bring our Messiah to the world!

I told Joseph. I couldn’t not tell Joseph, and I have never seen him so angry. He went right to Father and broke off our engagement. Father was just as angry and told Mother I would be stoned if I stayed here…so Mother said I was coming to see you.

Lizzie, what am I going to do? I am so sad about Joseph. He is so angry — and has a right to be. Maybe the angel will come and talk to him. Maybe God will make things right again.

Lizzie, I am so sad; and at the same time, I feel this joy inside of me. I feel the love that this child is…I can feel it in my heart. It’s like whenever I feel my heart breaking over Joseph, the baby touches my heart and I am whole again.

Please think for me, Lizzie. I can’t understand why this is happening. Help me think this through like we did when we were girls.  We could always come up with a plan together. Girl, I need you more than ever. I will be there in a few days.

Love,  
Mary

**Adults and Confirmation Students:**

# h[ttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA-gx-PWB0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA-gx-PWB0A) Bishop Barron on The Spirituality of Advent (6min)

<https://dailycatholicgospel.com/adventreflections> Daily Advent reflections by Bishop Barron (*highly recommended*)