



# The Good News of St Matthew Catholic Parish

## In the Year of Our Lord 2015

Winter Volume 4 Issue 5

St. Matthew Catholic Church 400 Sunset Rd El Paso, TX 79932

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Our Christmas Issue features seasonal articles about Advent, our featured 'Spotlight' article, as well as contributions from our parishioners, and a very special look at two brilliant students, who will warm your heart with their personal stories...

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

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### What is Advent Really?

Advent is a popular season of the Church Year among Catholics and Orthodox Christians however many Catholics and Christians wonder what is the meaning of Advent? They have heard the name, perhaps have heard of a few of the customs, such as the Advent wreath, but otherwise, the season remains a mystery. Is it Christmas? Is it just like Christmas or isn't it? What are the liturgical colors How do we define Advent?

These are excellent questions. An understanding of the Church year is an important aspect of Christian doctrine although many Christians do not avail themselves of this amazing spiritual tool to deepen their prayer life. Also, even those that aren't Christian may find benefit in discovering this season of contemplation and simplicity. Advent is derived from a Latin word meaning "arrival" and is about the arrival of Jesus Christ. The official color of The Advent season is violet/purple (except week three which is rose/pink), and Advent is observed on each of the four Sundays immediately prior to Christmas.

The duration of Advent is either twenty four {24} or twenty five {25} days. It can begin in either early December or at the end of the month of November depending on the year. The date of the first week of Advent is different for The Eastern {Orthodox} Church and The Western {Roman} Church.

In the Catholic Church, Christmas commences at Midnight on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Eve of the Epiphany on January 5<sup>th</sup>. In the Orthodox Church the Feast of Christmas will be celebrated this season on Thursday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016. For most Americans, Christmas seems to begin in October or even September (I saw Christmas trees displayed in a store in July!). This is probably why some persons among us have little appreciation for Advent. The truth is that the Season of Advent serves as a separate Christian season from Christmas and the focus of Advent is distinct from Christmas.

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Photos from St. Matthew Parish



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+ *Hope* + *Faith* + *Joy* + *Love* +

## What is Advent Really?

Advent is a period of expectation of the first coming of Christ. Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The Virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” [1] The Book of Isaiah was written during the Kingdom of Judah and the reign of the four Kings dated from the mid to late 8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE; Meaning that each Advent in our lives commemorates almost three-thousand years [2] of anticipation of the birth of our Savior. Therefore Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. These Four Sundays in the church calendar written thousands of years prior are shared with us by the prophets and faithful believers of the Old Testament and with us as believers in The Old and New Testament defining Advent as anticipatory of but not as the Feast of Christmas . Advent is more than our spiritual preparation for the celebration of Jesus birth at Christmas. “We live between the first coming of Jesus when he was born at Bethlehem and his Second coming at the end of time when he will come as Judge of all. Advent also serves as a time for us to reflect on the second coming of Jesus. So Advent offers us an opportunity for reflection and meditative contemplation of the two comings of Jesus; our preparation for the celebration of Jesus’ birth and our preparation for his Second Coming.

In two of the Eucharistic Acclamations we profess our faith in Jesus’ second coming: “ We proclaim your Death O Lord and profess your resurrection until you come again.” and “When we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come in glory.” [3] “In the Creed which we profess every Sunday we proclaim: “He will come in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.” During the early part of Advent {until December 16<sup>th</sup>} the church asks us to reflect on and prepare for the second coming of Jesus. That is why on the First Sunday of Advent each year we read excerpts from a chapter in each of the Gospels where Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD but to which we may also see referring to his Second Coming. The readings of the First Sunday of Advent also invite us to watch for the second coming of Jesus. The readings of the Second Sunday of Advent invite us to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus. That is why each year on the Second Sunday of Advent we listen to the Gospel and John the Baptist asking us to prepare a way for the Lord. On the Third Sunday of Advent each year we can detect some of the readings encouraging us to be patient for Jesus’ Second Coming. [4]

Traditionally Advent has been a time of penitence and fasting, as opposed to the Feast of Christmas. The "Gloria" section of the Mass is not used during Advent and there is an emphasis on repentance, which is also shown by the prominence of John the Baptist, in Advent, as the final prophet prior to the coming of Jesus.

Advent is simple while Christmas is celebrated as the single most important feast of the Church after Easter. The former penitential, the latter joyous. Advent is about anticipation, while Christmas is about fulfillment. In Catholic and Orthodox traditions, Advent is acclaimed with its own customs and traditions, including the advent wreath; a beloved devotional consisting of greenery and four or five candles (depending upon whether the "Christ Candle," lit during Christmas day, is included.

May you experience a blessed and reflective Advent this year and always!

*Contributed by Carlos Rodriguez, Editor...*

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Thank you everyone for all your Time Talent and Treasure - May God Continue to Bless you!

Is Jesus Calling you?

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## St Matthew Catholic School

SHAPING YOUNG HEARTS AND MINDS TO SERVE GOD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

### St. Matthew School Class of 2016

2  
0  
0  
6



**Nicholas & Mark Robert 2006**



**Nicholas & Mark Robert Class of 2016**

2  
0  
1  
6

#### **Featured Falcon Students...**

St. Matthew Catholic School is proud to announce that the students who entered the school when it first opened in 2006 are now graduating from 8<sup>th</sup> grade. From the 29 students in the Class of 2016, two of them have been at St. Matthew Catholic School since 4K. Let me introduce you to them: Mark Robert Segaline and Nicholas Ruiz.

*My name is Mark Robert Segaline. I have been attending St. Matthew Catholic School since Pre-K. I was 4 years old. I started school here the first year it opened. Now I'm 14 and in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Since being with the school, I've always felt that I was surrounded by family. All of my teachers have been caring and have guided us well. I've known some of them for many too; especially, Mrs. Robles, who has been at St. Matthew as long as I have. Father David has been here since St. Matthew opened. He guides and teaches us well in God's teachings. My teachers have high standards for us and I have learned so much from them. I've also grown up with many of my classmates and best friends. Nicholas Ruiz and I have been friends and classmates since Pre-K. In kindergarten, I made new friends like Hunter Pendergras, Joseph Vargas, and Francisco Vargas. Many other close friends have come along during the years. After this year, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, many of us will go our separate ways.*

*My education here has prepared me well for high school through NJHS and other experiences. Growing up with God's teachings has helped me become a good person with a positive attitude. We are thankful to the parish and Father David for making our School the best it can be.*

*My name is Nicholas Ruiz and I am in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Matthew Catholic School. I have been a student at this school since Pre-K, 2006. I was only four years old at the time and am now about to turn fourteen. St. Matthew is the only school I have ever known. As I reflect on my years here I have to say that the school has not only helped me academically but has brought me closer to God. Serving God and community is an important part of what I have learned. I have experienced the school from the beginning and it has own into something very special. I feel it has helped make me the person I am today. It will always be a special part of my life. I am very grateful to my parents and truly blessed to have had the opportunity to attend St. Matthew Catholic School*

It is in Giving we Receive

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## In our Spotlight this month, we feature



***Marcy Trujillo of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Let's find out more about Marcy, and the ministry of St. Vincent de Paul...***



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay ministry, was founded in the 17th century in Paris, France by Frederic Ozanam. He modeled the Society in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul, who served Jesus Christ by ministering to the poor. The Society has grown into a multi-faceted international organization that serves Christ's needy.

St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) members, known as Vincentians, are organized at the parish level in working groups known as Conferences. In El Paso County there are 22 SVDP Conferences, and growing. In order to pool resources and provide some continuity between the Conferences, they are organized into 4 districts, also known as Vicariates. For the past two years, the president of one those Vicariates has been our very own Marcelino 'Marcy' Trujillo. He is the president of the St. Peter Vicariate which includes St. Matthew's, Queen of Peace, St. Luke's, St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Patrick's Canutillo, and San Judas Tadeo Conferences.

Marcy, his wife Lily, and their four children have been members of St. Matthes parish for 18 years. Marcy holds a degree in electrical engineering from the University of New Mexico, and is a firm principal at Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, a local engineering and architectural firm.

Marcy explained to The Good News of St. Matthew's that the donations SVDP collects from the parishioners goes directly to those in need through three activities. The first activity is Home Visits. Vincentians visit the poor living in and around St. Matthew's parish (you would be surprised at the number of poor people in our parish), and if warranted will provide assistance with utility bills, rent, food, clothing and/or furniture.

The second way SVDP reaches the poor is through Food Pantries. Donations from St. Matthew's, and the other west side Conferences are used to operate the Canutillo Food Pantry located at 6950 Third St. Canutillo, TX. This food pantry, in conjunction with the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank, provides food to 320 west side families each month.

And finally the SVDP Thrift Stores. Donations of clothing, furniture and house hold items are taken to the SVDP Thrift Stores where they are sorted, cleaned and either given to the poor, or sold. Proceeds from sales are used to pay for the stores operating expenses and to buy additional basic need items for the poor that are not donated in sufficient numbers (i.e. beds, mattresses, kitchen tables, and chairs). SVDP operates two thrift stores, one in Canutillo, Tx., and the other is located on Piedras Street.

One of the things that Marcy likes best about SVDP is that it is very low key, much like himself. "We don't spend a whole lot of time advertising who we are, or holding a lot of meetings," said Marcy, "we just collect what we can each month, get the donations to the poor, and try to be good stewards of the parishioners' hard earned money." He also enjoys the fact that although SVDP is a large multi-national organization, it is still very much a grass-roots type mission. "Each conference has its own personality and is shaped by the local parishioners'. Each conference is empowered to use its own unique talents and resources, the best way that they can, to help the poor. As our founder Federic Ozanam said, "No charity is foreign to the Society".

We here at The Good News of St. of St. Matthew's salute Marcy, and thank him for his service to our parish, and all he has done to help our own.

You can learn more about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at their website [svdpelpaso.org](http://svdpelpaso.org). If you, or someone you know is in need of assistance, please call (915)545-4263. |

If you would like to donate clothing or furniture, please call [\(915\)564-4357](tel:9155644357).

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Jesus Loves You Always! No Matter What!

## Did You Know? Here are some fun facts about Christmas!

### Why do we have 'Christmas Trees'?

The evergreen tree was an ancient symbol of life in the midst of winter. Romans decorated their houses with evergreen branches during the New Year, and ancient inhabitants of northern Europe cut evergreen trees and planted them in boxes inside their houses in wintertime. Many early Christians were hostile to such practices. The second-century theologian Tertullian condemned those Christians who celebrated the winter festivals, or decorated their houses with laurel boughs in honor of the emperor: "Let them over whom the fires of hell are imminent, affix to their posts, laurels doomed presently to burn: to them the testimonies of darkness and the omens of their penalties are suitable. *You* are a light of the world, and a tree ever green. If you have renounced temples, make not your own gate a temple." But by the early middle ages, the legend had grown that when Christ was born in the dead of winter, every tree throughout the world miraculously shook off its ice and snow and produced new shoots of green. At the same time, Christian missionaries preaching to Germanic and Slavic peoples were taking a more lenient approach to cultural practices—such as evergreen trees. These missionaries believed that the Incarnation proclaimed Christ's lordship over those natural symbols that had previously been used for the worship of pagan gods. Not only individual human beings, but cultures, symbols, and traditions could be converted.

Of course, this did not mean that the worship of pagan gods themselves was tolerated. According to one legend, the eighth-century missionary Boniface, after cutting down an oak tree while speaking in opposition to that ....sacred to the pagan god Thor (and used for human sacrifice), pointed to a nearby fir tree instead as a symbol of the love and mercy of God

### When was Jesus born?

The Bible does not specifically say when Jesus was born. The Gospels of Luke and Matthew associate his birth with the time of Herod the Great. Thus, it is generally accepted that the year of his birth was between 6 and 4 BC. The Gospel of Luke speaks of shepherds watching over their sheep in the fields; so his birth would have been in the spring, summer or early fall. Some people have attempted to establish the date by identifying the Star of Bethlehem with a known astronomical event.



### Who were the 'Magi'?

The **Magi**, also referred to as the (Three) Wise Men or (Three) Kings were, in the **Gospel of Matthew** and Christian tradition, a group of distinguished foreigners who visited **Jesus** after his birth, bearing gifts of **gold**, **frankincense** and **myrrh**. They are regular figures in traditional accounts of the **nativity** celebrations of **Christmas** and are an important part of Christian tradition. According to Matthew, the only one of the four **Canonical gospels** to mention the Magi, they came "from the east" to worship the "king of the Jews". Although the account does not mention the number of people "they" or "the Magi" refers to, the three gifts has led to the widespread assumption that there were three men. In **Eastern Christianity**, especially the **Syriac churches**, the Magi often number twelve. Their identification as kings in later Christian writings is probably linked to Psalms 72:11, "*May all kings fall down before him*".

## Gods True Parable

Our Lord was a brilliant story teller. As the Gospels inform us, He touched the hearts and minds of His listeners with poignant –sometimes ironic-and even humorous stories that we still treasure today as parables. Some of His parables are known simply by their titles the Prodigal Son, the Fig Tree and the Mustard Seed, for example-and traditionally Christians everywhere needed only to hear only a small reference to a parable to appreciate the deeper meaning of Jesus teaching. The parables are away, par excellence, to appreciate Jesus’ teaching style. Pope Benedict XVI, during an Angelus address in 2011, noted that the way Jesus distinguished between the disciples and the crowd. He spoke openly to the disciples about the kingdom of God, but He spoke of it to others in parables, “to encourage their decision, conversion of the heart,” according to Pope Benedict. “Indeed, by their very nature, parables demand the effort of interpretation; they not only challenge the mind but also freedom”.

But he also noted that Jesus’ parables were ‘autobiographical. “God’s true ‘Parable ,” Pope Benedict said, “is Jesus himself, his Person who, in the sign of humanity, hides at the same time reveals his divinity. In this manner God does not force us to believe in him but attracts us to him with the truth and goodness of his incarnate Son: love, in fact, always respects freedom. To study the parables, then, is to study both the teachings and the person of Jesus Christ.

It is striking that the parables still resonate so well in a technology-drenched culture that exists today. Pope Francis loves to talk and teach about Jesus’ parables, and also uses his own to get a point across. Think about his vivid even earthy imagery in calling on priests to be “Sheppard’s living with the smell of sheep”. Or his twist on the parable of the Sheppard who leaves his 99 sheep to find the one that is lost. Talking about today’s culture, Pope Francis has said that “we have one in the pen and 99 we need to go looking for”. Parables may be particular to our time, but they still point us to something deeper. And in the hands of the best teachers, they can even show us eternity.

-TCA

In these testimonials, our parishioners tell us about how as members of St. Matthew’s they live their faith and offer each of us spiritual opportunities like committing to one hour a week, for each week of Advent, in Eucharistic Adoration.

“I have such fond memories of going to midnight Mass at St. Matthews. My mom would wake us up around nine in the evening, and we would get dressed up, and make our way to the church EARLY! It was always so crowded for midnight mass. When I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade one year, after mass I ran into an old friend from grade school that I had not seen in years. We invited her and her family over to our house for food & fellowship. We spent all night talking and laughing. The next thing I knew it was Christmas morning! We opened our gifts, had lots of coffee and I remember thinking about the night before...how lovely the mass was and just having a sense of belonging to a. Matthews”.

-Terri R.

Our family used to have an open house every Christmas Eve. So many people from church would come over with food, and gifts for our family. We would then go to midnight mass and I had this feeling of feeling special. I was at the church I loved so much, with the people I loved so much, and Christmas was just the best time of the year”.

-Mario G.

My Mom and Dad would make such a big deal about going to Mass on ‘Jesus’ birthday! We did not go to midnight mass; instead we would go on Sunday to the ten o’clock service. I remember one tear our dear Fr. Justin was saying Mass on Christmas day. The homily was about how special it was to be a part of a huge family being Catholic, and Fr. Justin had a glow about him that morning. I’ll never forget how Fr. Justin went a little over, the time it took him to say his homily...but the message made me really think about how blessed I was to be at St. Matthews and how we here in the valley had such a big church family. I just know that Fr. Justin is looking down on us every day, especially Christmas day, and I know he is smiling at the way we at St. Matthews all share the love and peace that Jesus instills in our hearts as Catholics”.

-Candy S.

Forgive and be forgiven!

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## Historically Speaking... And message for our Editor.

### Historically Speaking...

Advent typically begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and concludes on December 24. This season represents the preparation for the Nativity of the Lord with Candles, Wreaths and Calendars. Jesse Trees as symbols of Jesus' roots in Israel are popular with some families. European Catholics may celebrate December 6 in honor of the Feast of St. Nicholas of Myra by having children fill their shoes with bits of carrot and hay for his white horse or donkey [5] to be replaced with candy canes or other treats and in the evening after the family meal sharing stories about St. Nicolas and his compassion of secret giving to those in distress and the needy poor. Other feasts include St. Barbara on December 4<sup>th</sup> The Immaculate Conception on December 8<sup>th</sup>, Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12<sup>th</sup> and St. Lucy on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Las Posadas is celebrated in Mexico from December 16 until December 24. This custom of people dressing up like Joseph and Mary then walking to a different home each evening where they are received and those gathered for the evening pray the rosary, offer other prayers, then celebrate in a party like atmosphere with food, drink and song.



“When we first moved to the upper valley, back in 1975, we really didn’t go to church much. Then one Christmas a friend of mine from school invited me to go to mass with her one Sunday. I was hooked! I remember going home and telling my parents about what a great church I had just gone to. We were Catholics, but not really practicing our faith too much at the time. I went for a few more times, to mass, and then slowly the rest of my family began to attend mass with me. Over the years my brothers and sisters and I began to attend mass regularly. The very first Christmas mass we attended as a family is one of my fondest memories I have as a parishioner. Over the years my children and I always go to midnight mass. It is one of the highlights of our being parishioners.

-Beatrice G.

Thank you for all you do!

As we approach the end of another year in our lives; I would like to take the time to thank some very special people who have been so gracious in assisting me in publishing “The Good News of St. Matthews” newsletter. First and foremost I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for this opportunity. Throughout the year I have struggled with being faithful to this commitment I accepted several years prior of penning the newsletter and following in the footsteps of Dorothy Schatzman! Dorothy, I admire your persistency and dedication to our parish in the years you managed the newsletter. Thank you for trusting me to continue your excellence in publishing

There are so many people in our parish who have contributed their time and talent to our efforts; too many of you to name, but you know who you are including those who have written articles and our great front office staff and lest we forget the administration and faculty at St. Matthew’s school. The Knights of Columbus, my A.C.T.S brothers and sisters. And a gigantic St. Matthews ‘Thank You’ to Father David Fierro for your leadership and spiritual guidance proffered to each of us in our walk of faith!

Not long ago, a brilliant and faithful Catholic woman told me: “Carlos, you only need to listen to two people in your life...Jesus and your Mother”. Thanks Mom for believing in me and being so helpful over these past few years! You have been a beacon of trusting light that continues to shine bright in my life. You will never know how much I truly appreciate your help with ‘The Good News’, but also for reminding me of just how blessed I am to be a Catholic, and a member of St. Matthews.

Finally, I want to thank Our Blessed Mother in Heaven. You listen to my prayers, and you have always taken care of me, and helped me in times of trouble, despair and tribulation. You have extended your divine hands of mercy & love, providing me with guidance and invaluable insights which have helped me so much in this challenging endeavor. Indeed, we are all so truly blessed to be a part of what Jesus gifted us...His church and ministry. I believe that “The Good News” reflects his love for us through the testimonials of you our fellow parishioners when contributing to our quarterly offering as either attributed to or preferring to remain anonymous.

-Carlos Rodriguez, Editor

## *Requiem en Pace*

*As 2015 comes to a close We at Saint Matthew Parish would like to remember our fellow parishioners who died this year and each year prior. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let the perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen*

William E. Wood, Jr.	January 21, 2015
Sofia F. Rios	January 28, 2015
Julio Cesar Acevedo	February 12, 2015
Juan Valenzuela	February 22, 2015
Beatrice (Betty) Martinez- Bixler	March 3, 2015
John A. Perko	March 22, 2015
Ramona H. Garcia	March 15, 2015
Arturo Maya, Jr.	March 26, 2015
Tommie Ausley Cromeens, Jr.	March 25, 2015
Maria Mora	April 26, 2015
Leonard Eugene Pacha	April 26, 2015
Rita Marie Foster	May 21, 2015
Elina S. Compean	May 29, 2015
Angel Damian Dousa	May 30, 2015
Josefina L. Mora	July 16,2015
Guerrero Martinez	July 17, 2015
Sergio Gonzalez	July 30, 2015
Maria (Chata) Rayon	July 30, 2015
Roger Maldonado, Sr.	July 23, 2015
David Paul Tokoph	August 18, 2015
Maria Rivera	August 15, 2015
Elena Minjarez	September 7, 2015
Manuel Anchondo	September 10, 2015
Luis Eduardo Rafael Santos Vega	October 5, 2015
Rosa Maria Negrete	September 29, 2015
Elvira Huerta	October 4, 2015
Maria Cortez	October 18, 2015
Lorenzo Renteria	October 17, 2015
Alberto Porras	October 4, 2015
Nathan Katsura	
Isabel Ramirez	November 14, 2015
Efren Martinez	November 17, 2015



**In the Year of our Lord 2015 "The Good News of St Matthew Catholic Parish"**

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES:

[1] <http://www.gotquestions.org/Old-Testament-Christ.html>

[2] <https://www.quora.com/Why-do-we-count-years-backward-in-BC-and-then-forward-in-AD>

[3][4] [http://www.frtommylane.com/homilies/years\\_abc/advent-second\\_coming.htm](http://www.frtommylane.com/homilies/years_abc/advent-second_coming.htm)

[5] <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/celebrate-at-home/>

To learn more about these topics please visit the St. Matthew's Home Page and click on the Advent Wreath!

{Once there you can copy and paste these links onto your search browser}



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