



December 8 – December 14

Monday: Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

St. Paul-12:00 noon (English)

7:00pm (Spanish), Holy Family-5:00pm

Tuesday: Mass-7:00pm (Spanish)

Wednesday: Mass-12:00 noon (English),
3:00-6:00-Confessions

Thursday: Mass-9:00pm (Spanish)

Friday: Mass-12:00 noon (English)

Feast Day-Our Lady of Guadalupe

Rosary-6:00pm, Mass-7:00pm (Spanish)

Saturday:

Mass-11:00am (Spanish)

Our Lady of Guadalupe Fiesta-12:00-5:00pm

6:00pm – Vigil Mass (English)

Sunday:

8:00am – Mass, Holy Family (English)

9:30am – Mass, St. Paul (English)

12:00pm – Mass, St. Paul (Spanish)

“All of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as part of it, we belong to each other.” Rom 12:5

St. Paul Catholic Church and Mission

Iglesia Católica San Pablo y Misione

4178 Highway 441 South, Douglas, Georgia 31535

Parish Office Phone: 912-384-3560

Church email: saintpaul@windstream.net

Parish Website: www.stpaulmissions.org

Confessions: Thursday from 6:00-7:00pm,
Saturday 5:00-6:00 at St. Paul, or by appointment

Holy Family Catholic Church

126 Holy Family Rd., Willacoochee

Administration □ Administración

Parochial Administrator:

Rev. Saimel Perdomo

Deacon Ron Milkas

Church Secretary: Janet Benton

MASS INTENTIONS

INTENCIONES DE MISA

November 30 – December 6

Sunday, Dec. 7 – 9:30 Mass-Tina Edler & Family,
Tullia & Quirino Maini, Pierino & Liberata Biordi,
Palma Viselli, Scaccia Family, Sementelli Family,
Cerini Family

Monday, Dec. 8 – Shirley Holland

Wednesday, Dec. 10 – Randy Manning, Ramon Beroy,
Theodore Baar

Friday, Dec. 12 – Our Parishioners, Special Intention

Our Mission
Statement
Declaración
de Misión

“Nosotros, siendo muchos, formamos un solo cuerpo en Cristo, y en ese cuerpo cada uno esta al servicio de los demás.” Rm 12,5



In today's selection from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah we hear of the seven gifts associated with the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

God grant us his gift of fear, that we might serve him as his dutiful children; his gift of piety, that we might give him due reverence as our loving father; his gift of knowledge, that we may recognize the good we ought to do and the evil we should avoid; his gift of fortitude, that we may bravely overcome all the difficulties we shall meet in trying to be good; his gift of counsel, that we might discern and choose the best ways of living a life of devotion; his gift of understanding, that we may divine the beauty and value of faith's mysteries and the Gospel principles; and finally, his gift of wisdom, that we may appreciate how lovable God is, that we may experience and thrill to the delight of that goodness of his which is more than our limited minds can fathom.

O, the happiness that will be ours if we accept these precious gifts!

What are the signs associated with our making good use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Isaiah cites several:

Not judging by appearance or hearsay
Judging the poor with justice
Deciding aright for the afflicted

Today how can you make good use of the Holy Spirit's gifts today?

Oblates of St. Francis de Sales

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)

December 8—Mass Times:

St. Paul—12:00 noon (English)

7:00pm (Spanish)

Holy Family—5:00pm

Thank you

The Ladies' Auxiliary would like to thank everyone for their contributions of clothes and toiletries to the women in the Potter's House. This was a great success, and they wish to thank those who donated for their generosity.

**On Saturday, December 13th,
St. Paul's Church will hold its
annual Mass and celebration in
honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.**

Mass: 11:00 pm

Celebration: 12:00-5:00 pm

While we all honor the Mother of Our Lord, come and enjoy plenty of good food, music, and fun.

WINNERS OF KNIGHTS' GIFT CARD RAFFLE

The St. Paul Knights of Columbus thank those who participated in the VISA card raffle. The winners were: \$100-Bill Jacobs, \$300-Brenda Stubbs, \$500-Kim Perez. Proceeds went to the St. Paul Building Fund.



Segundo Domingo de Adviento

En la selección de hoy del Libro del Profeta Isaías, escuchamos sobre los siete dones asociados con la presencia y la acción del Espíritu Santo.

Que Dios nos conceda su don del temor, para que le sirvamos como hijos obedientes; su don de la piedad, para que le rindamos la debida reverencia como nuestro padre amoroso; su don del conocimiento, para que reconozcamos el bien que debemos hacer y el mal que debemos evitar; su don de la fortaleza, para que superemos con valentía todas las dificultades que encontremos al intentar ser buenos; su don del consejo, para que discernamos y elijamos las mejores maneras de vivir una vida de devoción; su don del entendimiento, para que adivinemos la belleza y el valor de los misterios de la fe y los principios del Evangelio;

Y, finalmente, su don de la sabiduría, para que apreciemos cuán amable es Dios, para que experimentemos y nos emocionemos con el deleite de su bondad, que supera lo que nuestra mente limitada puede comprender.

¡Oh, la felicidad que tendremos si aceptamos estos preciosos dones!

¿Cuáles son las señales que se asocian con el buen uso de los dones del Espíritu Santo?

Isaías cita varias:

- No juzgar por apariencias ni rumores
- Juzgar a los pobres con justicia
- Decidir correctamente por los afligidos

¿Cómo puedes hoy hacer buen uso de los dones del Espíritu Santo?

Oblates of St. Francis de Sales

**Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima
Virgen María (Día de precepto)**

8 de diciembre - Horarios de misa:

San Pablo - 12:00pm (inglés)

7:00pm (español)

Sagrada Familia - 5:00pm



El viernes 12 de diciembre, día de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, a las 6:00pm, tendremos un rosario al aire libre. Padres, por favor, traigan a sus hijos para participar. A las 7:00pm tendremos misa.

El sábado 13 de diciembre, la Iglesia de San Pablo tendrá su Misa y celebración anual en honor a Nuestra Santísima Virgen María.

Misa: 11:00pm Celebración: 12:00-

FYI
~FOR YOUR INFORMATION~



St. Paul will have a Toy Drive to collect new, unwrapped toys to give children this Christmas Season. Your donations can be placed in the designated box in the narthex.

NEXT BAPTISM CLASS

The next baptism class is **Wednesday, December 17 at 6:00pm in the social hall** for parents & godparents who want to baptize their child.

LA PRÓXIMA CLASE DE BAUTISMO

La próxima clase de bautismo será **miércoles 17 de diciembre a las 6:00pm en el salón social** para padres y padrinos. Esto es necesario antes de que los padres puedan comunicarse con la oficina para seleccionar una fecha.



AN ACCOUNT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP

St. Paul

FY Offertory Budget	\$305,000.00
Received to date	159,132.00
Received 11-30-25	6,223.00
FY Bldg Fund Budget	144,000.00
Received to date	13,675.00
Received 11-30-25	80.00

Offertory: Holy Family

Sun. (11-30-25): \$483.00

OUR WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PLEASE PRAY FOR
OUR ARMED FORCES**

Jose Bardomiano, Brenda Contreras, Sgt. Blake Downs (N. Carolina), MSgt. Emmanuel Gamboa (New Mexico), Kristopher Lentz (Fort Campbell, Kentucky), April M. Martin (Japan), Michael Martinez, CW3 Jeb S. McKinnon (USA), Martin Rios, Candise R. Rolerson (Witchita Falls, TX), Juan Vargas, Erick Vilches, Octavio Rodriguez, Rolando Chavez

**Pray for us that we
may be healed.**

Mary Bodnar, James Bookhardt, Benny Carino, **Lee Ann Cash**, Toby Cash, Maria Gomez, Gilbert Hernandez, Larry Hinson, Pong Holton, Tina Hoover, Sandye Jarrard, Norman Lafond, **Carlo Maini**, Roxanne Maini, Kayla Marlow, Margaret Milkas, Don Nolan, Malou Navarro, Ian Nugent, David Perry, Lou Pierce, David Powell, Andrew Smith, Gene Waldron, Ramona Witthoft, A.D. & Mary Young, **Rosario Zoffranieri**

PLEASE REMEMBER:

No Food to be eaten in classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, Day Chapel or Main Church—food may only be eaten in the Social Hall.

No hay Comida Para comer en las aulas, los pasillos, los baños, la capilla diurna y la iglesia principal--solo en salón social.

CAPÍTULO PARA LA PROTECCIÓN DE NIÑOS

Visite la página Web de la diócesis para leer el código: www.diosav.org/childyouthprotection o 888-357-5330.

CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Visit website: www.diosav.org/childyouthprotection
Or call 888-357-5330 to report knowledge of abuse.

ADVENT

SAYING "YES" TO GOD

The will of God is to make each of us "full of grace," just like Mary. A wonderfully appropriate Scripture passage for Advent, the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) is a main part of the Christmas story.

Christ became human because Mary was willing to yield to "the power of the Most High." Without Mary's assent at the Annunciation, God's plan for the Incarnation would have had to unfold another way. Mary's cooperation was essential, for God does not force his creatures to bend to his will. Rather, we are invited to cooperate with grace.

Mary serves as a model for each of us who have also been invited to cooperate with God's transforming presence. Christ can only be born in us if we, like Mary, are willing to say "Yes" to God's invitation and open ourself to the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Like Mary, we are all called to nurture and give birth to Jesus so that he may be born anew in our hearts and in our world.

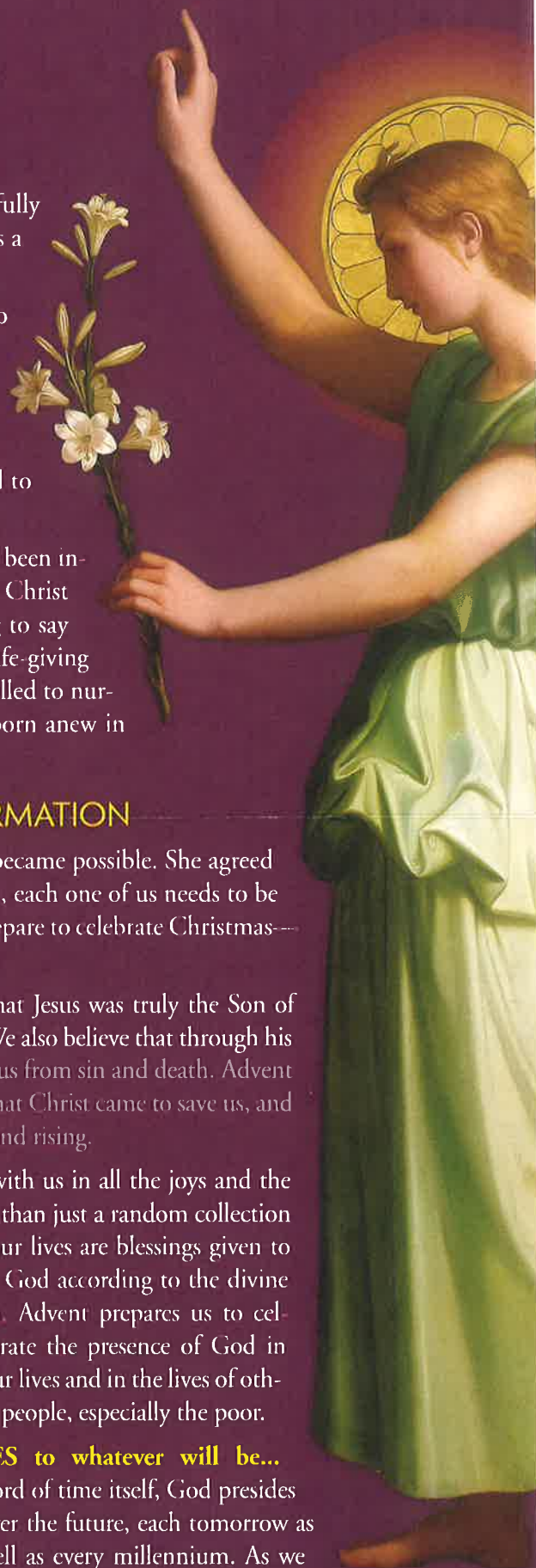
THE SEASON OF AFFIRMATION

When Mary said "Yes" to God, Christmas became possible. She agreed to bear Jesus in her womb. During Advent, each one of us needs to be able to say our own "Yes" to God as we prepare to celebrate Christmas—and bear Jesus in our hearts.

YES to what has been... We affirm that Jesus was truly the Son of God, our Emmanuel, God-With-Us. We also believe that through his life, death and resurrection, he saved us from sin and death. Advent is a time for us to acknowledge that Christ came to save us, and he did just that by his dying and rising.

YES to what is... God is with us in all the joys and the sorrows of our lives. More than just a random collection of atoms, our lives are blessings given to us by God according to the divine plan. Advent prepares us to celebrate the presence of God in our lives and in the lives of other people, especially the poor.

YES to whatever will be... Lord of time itself, God presides over the future, each tomorrow as well as every millennium. As we yearn for the full coming of the kingdom of God, our desire for the coming of Christ gets renewed in Advent.



THE “O ANTIPHONS”

The **O Antiphons** refer to the seven verses that are recited (or chanted) preceding the *Magnificat* during Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours. They cover the special period of Advent preparation known as the Octave before Christmas, December 17-23. These antiphons form the basis of the Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” put to music in 15th century France.

December 17—*O Wisdom*, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.

December 18—*O Sacred Lord* of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.

December 19—*O Flower of Jesse’s Stem*, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

December 20—*O Key of David*, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.

December 21—*O Radiant Dawn*, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice, come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

December 22—*O King* of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart, O Keystone of the mighty arch of humanity, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.

December 23—*O Emmanuel*, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.

THE SYMBOLS OF ADVENT

The **Advent Wreath** and the **Colors of Advent** are probably the most popular symbols of the season. The Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches where four candles (and often a fifth, in the center) are arranged. During Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each week representing the coming of the Lord. The first, second and fourth weeks’ candles are **violet**, the primary color of Advent, symbolizing royalty as we await the birth of Jesus Christ our King. The **rose** colored candle used during the third week represents joy as Christmas draws nearer. If used, **white** is the color of the center candle, representing the purity of Christ.

Another symbol, **The Jesse Tree** represents the family tree of Christ as a member of the royal family of King David, whose father was Jesse. Through this family history (see Mt 1:6-16), the story of God’s salvation plan is recalled in the royal line from Jesse to the coming of the Messiah. Each day of Advent a homemade ornament is added to the Jesse Tree, a small tree made of evergreen branches. These symbolic ornaments each represent a family member, event or prophecy that moves God’s plan to fulfillment in Jesus.

Other symbols include a **Nativity Scene (Crèche)** representing the birth of Jesus, and often including figures of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, angels, and animals. **Angels**, which are significant in the Advent season as messengers of God’s announcement of Jesus’ birth to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. **Evergreens**, plants like holly, ivy, and pine represent eternal life and God’s everlasting love.

FEASTS OF MARY DURING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Immaculate Conception December 8 (December 9th this year). Mary, conceived through an act of love by her mother and father, was born free of original sin and its effects from the first moment of her existence. This special privilege was conferred on her through God’s grace in anticipation of the Redemption.

Our Lady of Guadalupe December 12. This feast celebrates the apparition of Mary to Juan Diego in the hills near Mexico City in 1531. Diego’s cloak bore the image of Mary and has become Mexico’s most popular religious symbol. This appearance encouraged native peoples to embrace Christianity.

Mary, Mother of God January 1. The Council of Ephesus (431), one of the earliest councils of the Church, declared that Christ was divine as well as human and that Mary, therefore, could be called not only as “the Mother of Jesus,” but also as “the Mother of God.”



MASS READINGS FOR ADVENT 2024

1st Sunday Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12—4:2; Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

2nd Sunday Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6

3rd Sunday Zephaniah 3:14-18; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18

4th Sunday Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

second sunday of
ADVENT



ST PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH PRESENTS A

TOY DRIVE

**GIVE A TOY
LIGHT UP A HOLIDAY**

DONATIONS ACCEPTED FROM NOW UNTIL

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21



NEW TOYS ONLY

IGLESIA CATOLICA SAN PABLO PRESENTA UNA

COLECTA DE JUGUETES

REGALA UN JUGUETE
ILUMINA UN DIA FESTIVO

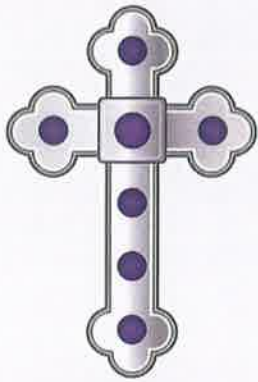
SE ACEPTAN DONACIONES
DESDE AHORA HASTA

DOMINGO
21 DE DICIEMBRE



Solo juguetes nuevos

CAMPAIGN UPDATE



**HARVEST
of HOPE**

COSECHA de ESPERANZA

WE PRAY TOGETHER

Heavenly Father, who in Your providence have brought us together at this time and in this place, we ask You to guide, inspire, and bless our Diocese of Savannah and the Harvest of Hope campaign.

Provide us, Your children, with the rich soil of faith, hope, and love, that the seeds we are planting now will bear abundant fruit for generations.

As we work together for the full coming of Your kingdom, O Lord, may we find a new way of belonging to You and to one another, rejoicing always in Your generosity.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Planting seeds for the future of
the Diocese of Savannah*



CAMPAIGN UPDATE

CAMPAIGN NUMBERS

Thank you to everyone who has made a pledge or a donation to the Harvest of Hope campaign!

ST. PAUL, DOUGLAS

- We currently have 161 pledges and donations
- For a total of \$364,862 (The goal is \$275,695)
- This is 132% of our total goal!

HOLY FAMILY, WILLACOOCHEE

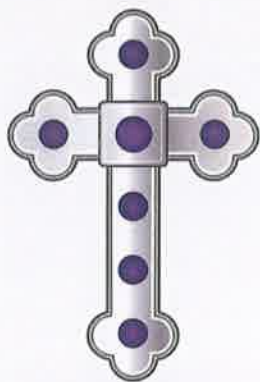
- We currently have 10 pledges and donations
- For a total of \$21,711 (The goal is \$21,496)
- This is 101% of our total goal!

If you have not pledged, join us in order to make this campaign a great success!

As a reminder, the Harvest of Hope campaign is over a 3 year period. If you pledged, you will be having payment envelopes sent to your address. You will be receiving these envelopes at the end of September. We will also have payment envelopes for the campaign here at our church. Don't forget your payments!

Thank you to our office staff who have done such a wonderful job throughout the campaign. A special thank you to Fr. Saimel Perdomo, Janet Benton, Gary Holland, and Nancy Jacobs!

For more information, please contact our campaign director Bryan Bedoya at 512-608-1360 or bbedoya@guidanceingiving.com



**HARVEST
of HOPE**
COSECHA de ESPERANZA

ORAMOS JUNTOS

Padre Celestial, que nos has reunido hoy y aquí en Tu providencia, te pedimos guíes, inspires y bendigas nuestra Diócesis de Savannah y la campaña Cosecha de Esperanza.

Otorga Señor a Tus hijos, el terreno rico de la fe, esperanza y el amor, para que las semillas que sembramos hoy den frutos abundantes para las generaciones venideras.

Mientras trabajamos juntos por la venida plena de Tu reino, Señor, que encontremos una nueva forma de ser para Ti y para los demás, regocijándonos siempre en Tu generosidad.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo Nuestro Señor. Amén.

Sembrando semillas para el futuro de la Diócesis de Savannah.



NÚMEROS DE LA CAMPAÑA

¡Gracias a todos los que se han comprometido o han hecho un donativo a la campaña Cosecha de Esperanza!

SAN PABLO, DOUGLAS

- Tenemos 161 compromisos y donaciones
- Para un total de \$364,862 (La meta es \$275,695)
- ¡Esto es 132% de nuestra meta total!

SAGRADA FAMILIA, WILLACOOCHEE

- Tenemos 10 compromisos y donaciones
- Para un total de \$21,711 (La meta es \$21,496)
- ¡Esto es 101% de nuestra meta total!

Si aún no te has comprometido con nosotros, ¡únete a la causa para que esta campaña sea un gran éxito!

Como recordatorio, la campaña Cosecha de Esperanza tiene una duración de 3 años. Si se comprometió, se le enviarán sobres de pago a su dirección. Los sobres le llegarán al final de septiembre. También tendremos sobres de pago para la campaña aquí en nuestra iglesia. ¡No olvide hacer sus pagos!

Gracias al personal de nuestra oficina, que han hecho un trabajo maravilloso durante toda la campaña. ¡Un agradecimiento especial para el Padre Saimel Perdomo, Janet Benton, Gary Holland y Nancy Jacobs!

Jubilee 2025

We Are Pilgrims of Hope

On May 9, 2024 Pope Francis solemnly announced that the Church's Jubilee year 2025 "will be a Holy Year marked by a lively experience of grace and an opportunity to be renewed in the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth, where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises."

"Hope is the virtue that gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the Spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope."

Our Pilgrimage Journey to and with Jesus

A pilgrimage is both an outer journey to a sacred place, and an inner journey to meet Christ and deepen our relationship with him. Thus Pope Francis desires that this Jubilee Year be a time "to encourage and sustain the hope that guides our steps towards the goal of a genuine, personal encounter with the risen Lord Jesus, who is not only the destination of our earthly pilgrimage but also a constant presence in our lives. I invite everyone to place their trust in the Lord who not only guides us, but is God-with-us, who loves us and walks with us in every circumstance of life. He shows us the path of love, lifts us up when we fall and supports us in our labors, opens our eyes to see our wretchedness and that of the world, but at the same time fills us with hope."



THE MEANING OF THE JUBILEE LOGO: PILGRIMS OF HOPE

The official logo of the 2025 Jubilee Year shows four colorful pilgrims, who symbolize all of humanity coming from all directions on their common journey to Christ. As they embrace each other in unity, the figure in front grasps the cross, which is the sign of our hope that united with Jesus we will also move through our death to new life. The elongated cross also changes at its base into an anchor, which was an ancient sign of hope because sailors used the anchor to stabilize ships during storms. So during the challenges of our daily lives and the events of the wider world symbolized by the rough waves beneath the pilgrims, hope keeps us focused on the goal of our pilgrimage to draw ever closer to encounter the Risen Christ.



WHAT IS A JUBILEE YEAR?

The jubilee year (from the Hebrew word *yobel*, meaning horn, which was blown to proclaim the year's beginning) is an ancient Jewish tradition (see Leviticus 25:8-17, 29-31) of pardon and reconciliation celebrated every 50 years (after a "sabbath of sabbaths," 7 x 7 years) when the community imitated God's mercy and forgiveness by forgiving debts and by each family returning to its own land and not cultivating it that year.

This jubilee tradition was first adapted for Catholics in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII as a universal "year of forgiveness of all sins." Since that time the "ordinary" jubilee years have usually been at 50 or now 25 year intervals (the last was in 2000), with other "extraordinary" jubilee years declared for special reasons like that of Mercy in 2015. Jubilee years are characterized especially by prayer, good works, pilgrimages to sacred sites (especially Rome), cultural events and special indulgences for those who participate.

THE HOLY DOOR OF ST. PETER'S

Since the 1500's, the ceremonial opening at St. Peter's Basilica of the usually locked massive bronze Holy Door (also called the "Door of the Great Pardon" since its 16 panels portray various biblical scenes of sin and redemption) begins each Jubilee Year. After reciting specific prayers and invoking the Holy Spirit, the Pope pushes open the door and enters the Church, inviting pilgrims likewise to renew their spiritual journey and cross the threshold.



The opening of the Holy Door invites the faithful to embark on a journey of even deeper faith. Crossing the threshold of the door is a powerful act, inspired by Jesus' words in John 10:9, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." This passage highlights the transformative experience of entering through the Holy Door, symbolizing the decision to follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The door serves as a physical and spiritual gateway, leading pilgrims into the sacred space of the church and inviting them to renew their commitment to their faith.

2025 JUBILEE PRAYER PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators
of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation of a
new heaven and a new earth, when,
with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever. *Amen.*



For more information on the 2025
Jubilee Year of Hope and how you may
participate more fully see the Vatican's
official website at
www.iubilaeum2025.va/en.html

ST PAUL'S COLUMBARIUM



*St Paul now offers a
serene and sacred place
for deceased loved ones.*

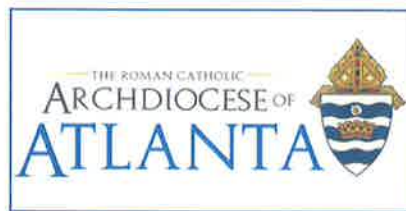


“LET US GO TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD”

P.S. 122

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

- Meet with the Priest is who is to perform the ceremony
- Bring Baptism and Confirmation certificates
- Must complete a pre-Cana (marriage) class either through the Diocese of Savannah, Arch-Diocese of Atlanta or the Diocese of St Augustine.
- Complete all necessary forms
- At least one of the witnesses **must be** Catholic.





Will You Notice the Shoot?

ANN M. GARRIDO

Today's first reading from the prophet Isaiah offers a familiar Advent image: the shoot sprouting from the stump of Jesse. The verses immediately preceding speak of God walking through the forest with an ax: "The tall of stature shall be felled, and the lofty ones shall be brought low" (Isaiah 10:33). But now, amidst all the destruction, a tiny sign of new life emerges, and the Spirit of God descends upon it, bearing many gifts—wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, awe, delight.

So often, when we scroll through the news, our attention is captured by violence and war and the "mighty" who make great noise when they fall. "Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees," echoes John the Baptist in today's gospel. If we are looking



SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
AUTHOR ANN
M. GARRIDO

for where God's Spirit can be found, however, Isaiah reminds us we will need to look elsewhere. We will need to attend to the quiet, fragile resurrections taking place below the surface when it appears as if all has been lost. If we seek wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, awe, and delight, we will need to look where the little ones of the earth are found. We must have our eyes open for the shoots.

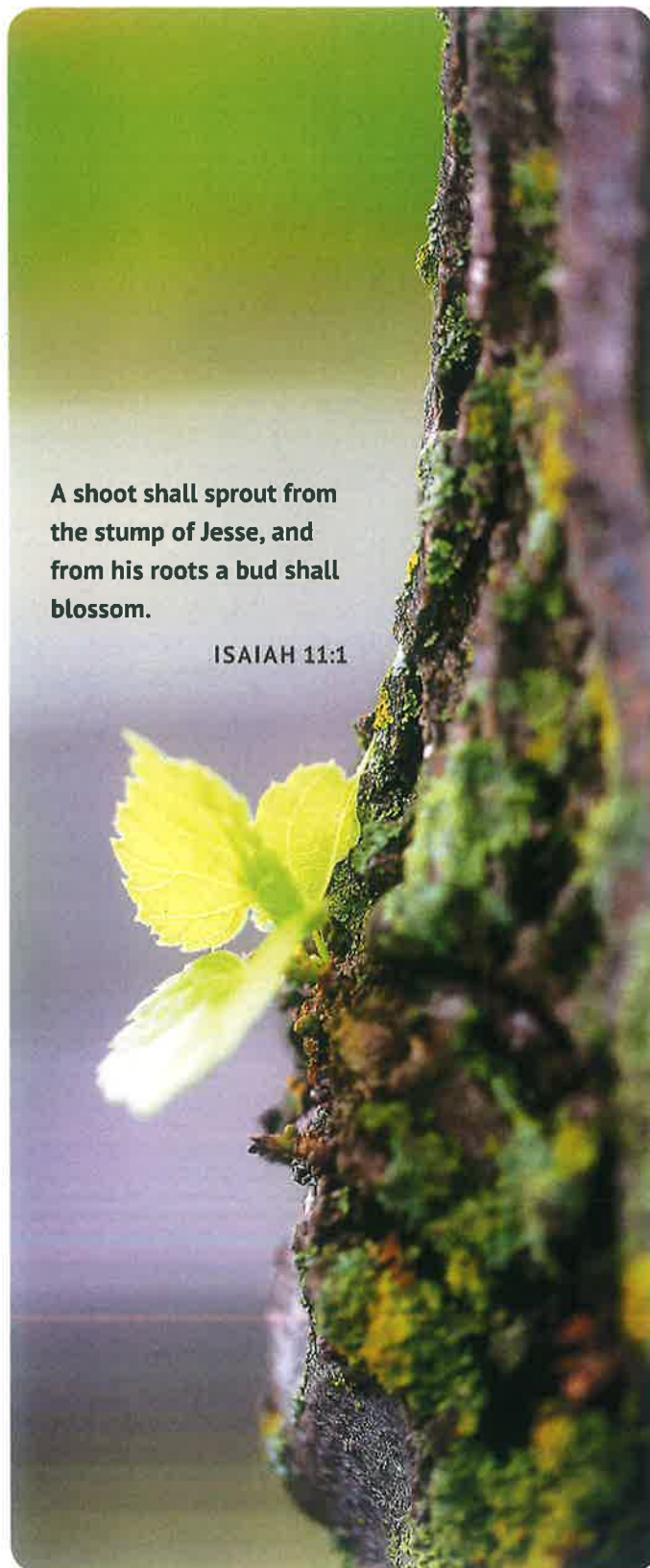
The gospels emphasize that Jesus was one such little one. Although the glory days of his people seemed to have come to a crashing close, they have not. In him, we glimpse the truth that life is stronger than death. We see that the future has not been erased, no matter how terrible the past. In him, we find our hope. ●

Reflect

***Are my eyes open to the small signs of God's work
in the world, or am I too distracted to notice?***

**A shoot shall sprout from
the stump of Jesse, and
from his roots a bud shall
blossom.**

ISAIAH 11:1



Dear Padre,

Do non-Catholics go to heaven?

Yes, they do, because of the grace of God at work in his people. To suggest otherwise would seem to imply that Catholics somehow have a “golden ticket,” or some kind of right that simply does not exist.

The Incarnation of Jesus healed the division between heaven and earth, a division established by the “sin of Adam” and confirmed by our own lives of sin. Through his passion, death, and resurrection, all has been restored to the manner that the Father first envisioned through his Creation. The division was between humanity and divinity, not between religious practices and divinity. Catholics believe and celebrate that God accepts all people of a good heart and a good spirit. God is not blinded by the labels that sometimes blind his people to the bigger reality.

When Catholics, or people of any religion, proclaim exclusivity and specialness, particularly when it concerns eternal life, all people should be very cautious about what they assume. To assume a certain type of arrogance—to yourself and to your belief and life of faith—that excludes others or separates another as “not one of us” simply has no place in the kingdom of God. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org



PASCAL HUOT / SHUTTERSTOCK

Monday

December 8
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Gn 3:9–15, 20
Eph 1:3–6, 11–12
Lk 1:26–38

Tuesday

December 9
Advent Weekday
Is 40:1–11
Mt 18:12–14

Wednesday

December 10
Advent Weekday
Is 40:25–31
Mt 11:28–30

Thursday

December 11
Advent Weekday
Is 41:13–20
Mt 11:11–15

Friday

December 12
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Zec 2:14–17
or Rv 11:19a;
12:1–6a, 10ab
Lk 1:26–38 or
Lk 1:39–47

Saturday

December 13
St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
Sir 48:1–4, 9–11
Mt 17:9a, 10–13

Sunday

December 14
Third Sunday of Advent
Is 35:1–6a, 10
Jas 5:7–10
Mt 11:2–11

Do you have a question for the Padre?

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NICOLÁS NÚÑEZ LC / CATHOLICA

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made “restless” by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 18, 2025