

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 8 <i>The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> Gn 3:9–15, 20 Eph 1:3–6, 11–12 Lk 1:26–38	December 9 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:1–11 Mt 18:12–14	December 10 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:25–31 Mt 11:28–30	December 11 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 41:13–20 Mt 11:11–15	December 12 <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i> Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47	December 13 <i>St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr</i> Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 Mt 17:9a, 10–13	December 14 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> Is 35:1–6a, 10 Jas 5:7–10 Mt 11:2–11

Do you have a question for the Padre?
Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



PASCALHOF / SHUTTERSTOCK

St. Agnes • St. Boniface • St. John the Evangelist

Rev. Michael Pampara Pastor email: pamparasdb@gmail.com

Father Michael Cell 308-660-5730

P O Box 309, Stapleton, NE 69163, email: abj Catholics@gmail.com

Parish Office 308-636-2421; Secretary, Kristie Walz Cell 308-636-8399

Website: www.abj Catholic.org - Facebook Page: St Agnes, St Boniface & St John the Evangelist

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



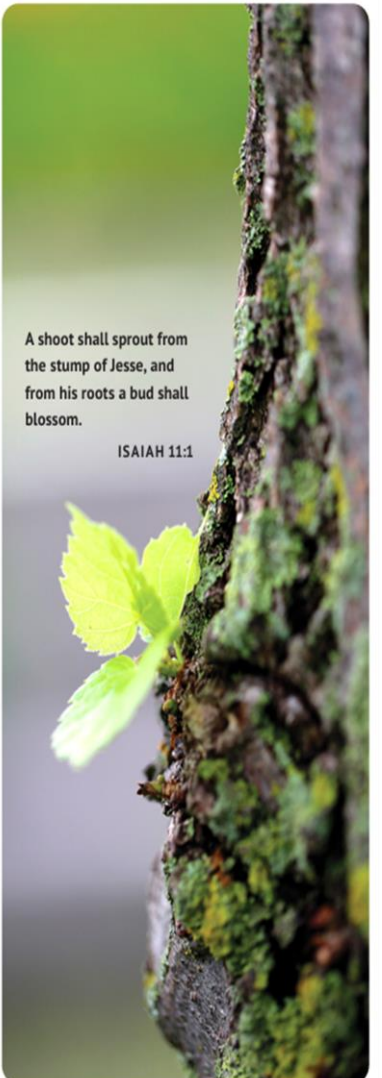
SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
AUTHOR ANN
M. GARRIDO

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



NICOLAS NUNEZ/CC / 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

Second Sunday of Advent (A) December 7, 2025

In this week's Gospel Reading and next week's, our Advent preparation for Christmas invites us to consider John the Baptist and his relationship to Jesus. In this week's Gospel, Matthew describes the work and preaching of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist appears in the tradition of the great prophets of Israel, preaching repentance and reform to the people of Israel. In fact, the description of John found in this reading is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). In this reading, John directs a particularly pointed call to repentance to the Pharisees and Sadducees, parties within the Jewish community of the first century.

John marks the conversion of those who seek him out with a baptism of repentance. Other groups in this period are thought to have practiced ritual washings for similar purposes, and John's baptism may have been related to the practices of the Essenes, a Jewish sect of the first century. John's baptism can be understood as an anticipation of Christian baptism. In this passage, John himself alludes to the difference between his baptism and the one yet to come: “I am baptizing you with water, for repentance . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11).

John's preaching of the coming of the Lord is a key theme of the Advent season. As John's message prepared the way for Jesus in the first century, we, too, are called to prepare ourselves for Jesus' coming. We respond to John's message by our repentance and reform of our lives. We are also called to be prophets of Christ, who announce by our lives, as John did, the coming of the Lord.

(Sign up for a Catholics Encounter Christ Weekend- See the flier in your church.)

Mass Schedule & Intentions
For the week of Dec 8, 2025

Sun.	Dec.	07	5:00 PM	SJ	All Souls
Mon.	Dec.	08	4:30 PM	SA	All Souls
Mon.	Dec.	08	6:00 PM	SB	All Souls
Tues.	Dec..	09	7:00 AM	SJ	Cecelia Allison †
Wed.	Dec.	10	5:30 PM	SA	Leonard Mackley †
Thurs.	Dec.	11	5:30 PM	SB	(Confessions at 5) Edna Griffith†
Fri.	Dec.	12	8:30 AM	SJ	David Neumann †
Sun.	Dec.	14	8:00 AM	SJ	John & Norma Schacher†
Sun.	Dec.	14	9:30 AM	SA	People of the Parish
Sun.	Dec.	14	11:00 AM	SB	Mary Jane Pandorf †



- Cohen Owens Dec 4th (Belated)
- Jayden Welch Dec 9th
- Margaret Ann Mills Dec 10th
- Chris Pandorf Dec 11th
- Claire Kulp Dec 14th

Ministry Schedule

Date: Dec 14	St Agnes	St Boniface	St John's
Time	Sunday 9:30 AM	Sunday 11:00 AM	Sunday 8:00 AM
Hospitality	Julie B.	Rod & MaKayla D.	Kaman & Klara D.
Lector	Mary A.	Mike P.	Molly W.
Server		Breckn D. & Ellie P.	Gregory W. & Leo W.
EMHC	Charles F. & Conrad P.	Diane P. & David P.	Jason & Jenny J.
Communion to shut ins or Music		David P.	Music: Kelsey

St. Agnes

Our Gifts to God & Church
November 30, 2025
Total Collection: \$288.00

Diocesan Appeal
Dollar Goal the
GOAL is MET!!!

Thrift Store
Open Dec 12th 9AM to 4PM

CCD Oct Dec 10th
Elementary 3:40 PM
High School 7:30 PM Meal Pelster

St. Boniface

Our Gifts to God & Church
November 30, 2025
Total Collection: \$1060.00

Diocesan Appeal
Dollar Goal \$5800 of \$7452 with
12 of 17 Donors
CCD Wed. Dec 10th
PreK to 2nd 4-5 PM
Supper 6:10
Class 6:30 to 7:30 PM
THERE IS a POTLUCK FOLLOWING
MASS AND CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DEC 14.
STEWARDSHIP GROUP 1 HOSTS.
ALL are WELCOME.

St. John's

Our Gifts to God & Church
November 30, 2025
Total Collection: \$551.15

Diocesan Appeal
Dollar Goal \$2600 of \$5179
with 8 of 15 Donors

CCD Wed, Dec 10th
PreK to 5th 3:40 PM
6th -12th Supper 6:30 O'Brien
Class Begins 7:00 PM

Mark your calendar
There will be a
meeting at St. Mary's
in Oconto on Monday
January 5th at 5:00
PM to make decisions
about the church.

Holy Day of Obligation
Immaculate Conception
December 8th
St John Sun.5:00 PM
St Agnes 4:30 PM
St Boniface 6:00 PM

Eternal Rest Grant unto him
O'Lord.
We remember
Tom Kennedy Sr.
who recently passed away.
May the hope of resurrection
bring peace to him.