Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 7, 2025

Second Sunday of Advent (A)

Isaiah 11:1–10 / Romans 15:4–9 / Matthew 3:1–12

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 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.

SCAN TO LEARN ABOUT AUTHOR ANN M. GARRIDO

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 working the world, or am I too distracted to notice?

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

53 South Road, Paget PG 03 | P.O. Box HM 727, Hamilton HM CX

Pastor: Reverend Joseph F. H. Morley, Vicar General • Cell: 705 0236

Email: stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com

Weekend Masses: Vigil: **5:00pm**, Sunday: 10:15am
Saturday 8:00pm (Neo-Catechumenal Mass).
Baptisms: by appointment 3 weeks in advance
Weddings: by appointment 6 months in advance

www.facebook.com/stmichaelpaget & "LIKE' us | Diocesan Webpage: www.romancatholicbermuda.bm

Parish Administrator:
Karen Marsh
email: karenmarsh.bda@gmail.com
(c) 799 0842

Pastoral Council CCD Coordinator:
Patricia Carreiro
email: pcarreiro1976@gmail.com
(c) 737 1047

Mass Schedule & Intentions

We welcome our parishioners and visitors who have come to St. Michael's to worship this weekend. May you be blessed by your presence here today.

MINISTRIES . . .

DECEMBER 6/7th - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM **Lector:** Laura DeFrias **EM:** Carmen Olivierie
10:15AM **Lector:** Cherry Ramdass **EM:** Joyce Lee
Collection: Jesse Almeida

DECEMBER 13/14th -THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM **Lector:** Karen Marsh **EM:** Peter Marsh
10:15AM **Lector:** Willie Forbes **EM:** Christine DaCosta
Collection: Carlos DeFrias

MASS INTENTIONS . . .

DECEMBER 6/7th - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM Olivia & Agostinho Sardinna Furtado & Sons & Daughters++
10:15AM The Intentions of St. Michael's Parishioners

DECEMBER 13/14th -THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00PM Adelina & Jose DeFrias ++
Mary & Benjamin Botelho ++
10:15AM The Intentions of St. Michael's Parishioners

Stewardship

sharing the gifts we have been given

NOVEMBER 22/23rd
COLLECTION: $452.25
SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR JAMAICA RELIEVE FUND: $529.75
Thank you for your generosity.

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE
to St. Michael's Church's: **BNTB Account # 2000 6060 081824 100.**

WHEN MAKING YOUR ONLINE TRANSACTION, BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND "COLLECTION" AS YOUR MEMO ON YOUR BANKING TRANSACTION.

Pastor's Point . . .

Dear Parishioners,

Isaiah imagines on that day a restoration of the harmony of the original creation before the fall: the cow and bear raising their children together as peaceable neighbours, not as predator and prey. This text from Isaiah thus looks past the first coming of Christ to his second, when God's eternal, eschatological (second coming) kingdom of peace will be established. The Isaiah text concludes with a vision of all the nations seeking out the glorious dwelling of the Davidic king, foreshadowing the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's promises.

While Paul reassures the Christians in Rome that God has not broken His covenant with Israel, John the Baptist warns the Jewish leaders that the covenant had always required them to "produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance" (Mt. 3:8), not merely to claim Abraham as their ancestor. Jesus' baptism "with the Holy Spirit and fire" points both to Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descends in wind and fire, and to Christ's role as the coming judge.

It is never easy to hear that we are wrong, especially when it means we have to do something differently. This was true for the followers of John the Baptist, as well. John told his followers to repent and change their ways in preparation for the coming of the kingdom of God. As would probably be the case today, some heard John's proclamation and transformed their thoughts, words, and deeds. Others might have heard the proclamation and ignored the call to coversion. The power of conversion is that it cannot be forced or coerced. Conversion must be freely chosen.

As we continue our journey through this Advent season, how do you respond when you hear the words of John the Baptist? Do you take notice of the areas in your own life where you might need conversion? Are you aware of the ways God calls you to growth and transformation? The choice is yours as you prepare for the celebration of the Incarnation (the arrival of Jesus on planet earth from a extraordinary woman called Mary). The world has been changed forever. Can you say the same about yourself?

Fr. Joe, Pastor and Vicar General

REFERENCE: 2026 Sourcebook for Sundays, Seasons, and Weekdays. The almanac for Pastoral Liturgy, p. 12, Year "A"

NICOLÁS NÚÑEZ LC / CATOLICA

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

Bishops Corner . . .

Dear Fellow-Catholics,

Pope Leo, during his apostolic journey to Türkiye last week, celebrated his only public Mass on Saturday evening, 29th of November. In his homily, he spoke about the feast of St. Andrew, the patron of the Orthodox Church, as well as the start of Advent, with a three-part call to promote unity.

First there is unity within the local Church united to Rome, which there are four different ethnic groups; Latin, Armenian, Chaldean, and Syriac. Then unity among all Christians, and finally unity with other Non-Christians.

The Pontiff reflected that we should want to walk together by appreciating what unites us, breaking down the walls of prejudice and mistrust, promoting mutual knowledge and esteem in order to give to all a strong message of hope and an invitation to become "peacemakers".

The Pope also suggested, "Let us make these values our resolutions for the season of Advent and even more so for our personal and communal life."

He ended his homily, saying, "We journey as if on a bridge that connects earth to Heaven, a bridge that the Lord has built for us. Let us always keep our eyes fixed on both shores, so that we may love God and our brothers and sisters with all our hearts in order to journey together and find ourselves one day united in the house of the Father."

The official text of the homily: https://tinyurl.com/yc2y6mzn

Have a serene weekend and a blessed 2nd week of Advent!

+ Wes Jurecka

Bishop Wes

Dear Padre,

Do non-Catholics go to heaven?

PASCAL HUOT / SHUTTERSTOCK

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

WORDS OF LIFE:

"Perhaps one of your friends has become pregnant unexpectedly. As someone who has been there, I encourage you to support your friend in her new journey of being a mother." Learn how at respectlife.org/support-her.

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities
"10 Ways to Support Her When She's Unexpectedly Expecting"

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS

The flower memorial envelopes are available. This is an opportunity to remember your loved ones, family and friends at Christmas. The names of those to be remembered will be published in the Christmas bulletin.

The Deadline for listing in the Christmas Bulletin is Sunday , December 21st | All names will be remembered during the Octave of Christmas

What is Happening in Our Diocese?

St. MICHAEL'S

- EMMAUS Bible Study: The last Bible Study for 2025 is December 9th and will resumes on January 13th 2026.
- Neocatechumenal Way - "The Word" is on Wednesdays at 8:00pm

  The celebration of the Neocatechumenal Way Eucharist - each Saturday at 8:00pm.

St. THERESA'S

- During the winter season St. Theresa's Cathedral will be locked at 4:00pm from Monday to Friday.
- Daily Mass is celebrated at 7:30am.
- Noon Day Mass in St. Theresa's Cathedral: The 12:10pm Mass is celebrated each Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

St. ANTHONY'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated Tuesday - Friday at 8:30am

St. PATRICK'S

- Daily Mass is celebrated at 8:00am
- The Rosary is recited every, WEDNESDAY at 10:00am
- Please be advised that due to Bishop Wes' trip to Canada next week, there will be no 6:00pm Portuguese Mass on Wednesday the 10th of December
- Adoration will be on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.
- A mass in Tagalog takes place on, THE SECOND FRIDAY of the month at 7:00pm.

St. JOSEPH'S

- A Filipino mass is celebrated every, THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH at 11:00am

STELLA MARIS

- A Filipino mass is celebrated on the LAST Wednesday OF THE MONTH at 7:00pm

ST. THERESA'S GIFT SHOP *Opening hours* - 10:00am-2:00pm. Tuesdays and Saturdays. Come and see what we have.

Up coming Events . . .

St. Joseph's "Afternoon of Christmas" will be held ***NEXT Sunday, 14th December at 2:30 p.m.***, in the Church (carols, songs, music). This is an "informal" gathering to enjoy a little fun and fellowship in the Spirit of the Season! A Social will follow in the Parish Centre.

Reverse Advent Calendar Food Drive

"It is better to give than to receive" Acts 20:35

Each day of advent, add an item from the list to a box. Completed boxes should be delivered to your church hall during the weekend of January 3/4, 2026 when attending mass. Alternatively, you can deliver your box to St. Patrick's Church Hall on Saturday, January 3, 2026 from 10:00am to 11:00am. Arrangements will be made for the boxes to be collected from the church halls for distribution. All food collected will be donated to The Eliza Dolittle Society food bank. Collection at each parish will be coordinated by each parish's St. Vincent de Paul representative. All questions can be directed to Elaine Kelly at 236-4613 or ekelly@ibl.bm.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS LITURGY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24th - 6PM

CALLING ALL CHILDREN

Parents, Would your children like to participate in the Children's Christmas Nativity? We need children to be part of this year's Family Mass by recreating the Children's Nativity of the Lord at the Family Mass.

Please email stmichaelsbermuda@gmail.com or call Karen, 799-0842 to enlist your children in this special recreation of the Nativity at this Mass. This used to be a very special part of the Family Christmas Liturgy, and we want to reignite the warmth and meaning in us all by bringing this special part of this Mass to life. **WILL YOU HELP US? Deadline is December 7th, THIS weekend,** as we will need to be sure we have enough children to make this happen. Assignment to roles and costumes will be December 14th, rehearsal date and time to TBD, once we have the children signed up.

Coffee Social

Please join us **THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14th** following the **10:15am Mass** for our Christmas Coffee Social.There will be something special for the Kids. Please consider sharing your favourite savoury or sweet offering,we would be very grateful.

Please make every effort to support and enjoy this social.

Please consider helping, thank you!

DECORATE the Church

The Altar Society volunteers will be decorating the Church for our Christmas season

THIS Saturday, December 13th at 9:30 am.

Please come help to bring our Church into this festive season. Many hands make light work.

All are welcome.

LET'S TALK MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Brochures . . .

Please find included in the Bulletin rack *(in Portuguese and English)* and as individual links to the weekly email blast three flyers discussing your Mental Health and Wellness. They are brilliant, informative and very helpful flyers.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health illness or suicidal thoughts, please call: 236-3770 weekdays from 8:00am to 5:00pm (MWI) 911 or 239-1111 (24/7 Crisis hotline)

Our Sunday Readings

ISAIAH 11:1-10
PSALM 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
ROMANS 15:4-9
MATTHEW 3:1-12

When He Comes

ISAIAH 11:1-10

Reading closely

1. What all might God's people have wanted from their rulers?
2. How does God empower this ruler?
3. What will this ruler do?
4. How will this ruler's actions be different from those who ruled before him?
5. How is the rest of creation affected?
6. Why will other nations be drawn to Israel?
7. How might God's people have reacted to this prophecy?

Living the word

8. What part of the passage stands out to you? Why?
9. What are all the ways life would be different in a world like this one?
10. How does Jesus fulfill this prophecy?

THE FIRST READING

Sprouting in God's spirit

When Isaiah wrote this passage, he was angry about the quality of Israel's kings; none were as good and holy as David (the son of Jesse) had been. The impiety of these bad kings made the hereditary line of Jesse seem like a lifeless stump. Things will change when God sends his spirit upon a descendant of David. This new king won't follow bad advice but will obey only God (v.2). The king will also have the strength to carry out God's will. His many virtues will flow from his total obedience to God (*fear of the LORD*). We draw our list of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit from this passage.

The king won't let personal preferences or favoritism influence his actions (v.3). Instead he will unfailingly act with justice. No one who acts wickedly will be able to stand against him (v.4). Isaiah mentions the customary royal robes and insignia to underscore the king's goodness and loyalty to God (v.5).

A new world order

Once the new king establishes justice, peace will come to every person and to all creation. Wild animals will no longer be a threat (vv.6-8). God will purge the world of violence and suffering until the holiness of Jerusalem (*my holy mountain*) encompasses all creation (v.9). Everyone will be drawn to the new king and to God's kingdom. All will know and obey the LORD (v.10).

MATTHEW 3:1-12

Reading closely

1. What Old Testament stories are set in the desert and/or by the Jordan River?
2. Imagine that you lived at the time of John the Baptist.
   a. What are people saying about John?
   b. Do you want to go out to hear John? Why/Why not?
   c. What is your impression of John?
   d. Do you go to be baptized? Why/Why not?
   e. Who do you think John is talking about when he speaks of one *mightier than I*?
   f. What do you think about John's reaction to the arrival of the Pharisees and Sadducees?
   g. Why do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees show up?
   h. How do you react to what John says to these religious leaders?
   i. What do you think is going to happen?
   j. What do you hope will happen?
   k. What all do you feel?

Living the word

3. What, if anything, do you feel about the Advent season?
4. Does this passage reinforce or contradict your feelings about Advent?
5. How does each reading challenge you?
6. How does each reading comfort you?

THE GOSPEL READING

John the Baptist

John spent time in the desert, a place people went to discipline themselves and listen for God. He ate what was available. His clothes were like Elijah's (2 Kings 1:8). In Malachi 3:23 we hear that Elijah will return to warn people about *the day of the LORD*. John fulfilled this expectation.

John earned the title *the Baptist* because he adapted the practice of ritual washing. People were baptized by John because they believed that God was coming soon to judge them. Like the ancient prophets, John warned people to *repent*, to turn away from their old lives and ready themselves for God's arrival.

Abraham's descendants

The religious leaders who show up to be baptized don't plan on acting any differently. John yells at them to stop faking it (vv.7-8). Doing what is moral and just (*bearing good fruit*) is a notable theme of the Gospel of Matthew (see also 7:17-20 and 25:31-46).

John also warns the leaders that they shouldn't think God will protect them simply because they're Jews (v.9a). Their claim to having Abraham as their ancestor is ultimately meaningless (v.9b).

Mightier than I

John says several things that contrast him with *the one who is coming*.

- John baptizes with water; the one who comes will baptize with God's spirit
- John's baptism is only a sign of change; the one who comes will bring about real and decisive change
- John is not even worthy to act as a slave for the one who is coming

With fire

John evokes Malachi 3:19 when he warns that God's judgment includes a fiery purgation. John describes a farmer tossing wheat into the air to separate it from the chaff, the inedible part. The grain is kept; the rest is burned.

PRAYER

from Saint John Paul II

O God,
Creator of the universe,
who extends your paternal concern over every creature and guides the events of history to the goal of salvation...

Renew for us the wonders of your mercy:
send forth your Spirit
that he may work in the intimacy of hearts,
that enemies may begin to dialogue,
that adversaries may shake hands and
peoples may encounter one another in harmony.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY
Hamilton, HM EX
525-1191 - svdp@northrock.bm

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Committee Members

Grace Lovecchio
President
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

Patricia Rodrigues
Vice President
St. Anthony's Parish

Sandra Neal
Secretary
Stella Maris Parish

Hellen Gillis- Cooze, CA
Treasurer
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

Anthony Donaghy
Privacy Officer
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

Dcn. Matthew Arnold
Chaplain
St. Patrick's Parish

Joanne Judd
Director
Loaves & Fishes
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

Daphne DeSilva
Committee Member
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

Tommy Sinclair
Committee Member
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

Vanessa Turner
Committee Member
St. Theresa's Cathedral Parish

1st December 2025

Season's Greetings everyone,

Wishing you a blessed Advent Season! As the anticipation of the birth of the Christ Child, together with the excitement of Christmas events, shopping, gift giving etc. starts to affect us all, let us take a moment to thank God for our own blessings of family, health, and friends. We also thank God for the privilege we enjoy in assisting and being of service to and sharing of our gifts with others. We believe the SVdP Society makes a positive impact in the community around us. Thank you for whatever role you play to help make this happen, whether as a volunteer, donor, sharing our news with others etc. Every effort makes a difference, always remembering that *"There go I but for the Grace of God."*

As reported in last year's 2024 letter, the following ministries continue:

The General Food Voucher Programme – In our community today the number of individuals and families seeking assistance with food insecurity throughout the year is ever increasing. The continual rise of inflation affects all aspects of daily living. Committee Members who field the numerous phone requests are acutely aware of the extent of this critical situation. The disparity between the "haves" and "have nots" is widening and in most cases through no fault of their own.

The Christmas Voucher Programme - Christmas "Hamper" Food Vouchers will be distributed to over 500 individuals in December. A daunting but rewarding task. In the spirit of "Christmas Giving" the provision of food to the many vulnerable members of our community provides a very temporary feeling of joy and happiness – one many of us take for granted.

The Loaves & Fishes Feeding of the Vulnerable Programme. This 16-year programme of weekly distribution of hot meals continues each Sunday, serving between 130-140 people each time. We are grateful to the Portuguese Bakery for their major support and to Crow Lane Bakery for their donations. We are equally grateful for the adult and teen volunteers who come from all walks of life for their continued support and generosity throughout the year. Volunteers are welcome, so if interested in participating in this rewarding activity, and it is rewarding - please contact Joanne Judd, the programme director, on 337-6625 for further information.

Hardship Assistance Programme - Additionally, in a crisis, SVdP continues to provide relief for BELCO, Medical, Rent, and other urgent expenses on a case-by-case basis throughout the year.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society Committee wants to increase its reach-out ministries and the SVdP Committee Membership. If you are a Roman Catholic; have a strong sense of compassion, empathy, and love of the poor and vulnerable; have a generous spirit and would like to participate in giving back to the Community please call Grace Lovecchio, our President, at 525-1191 and have a chat. Or alternatively, our current Committee Members are listed at the side of this letter. Any member will be happy to share further information with you. Pray on it and get in touch! This is an important part of our Faith life, and your participation is needed and would be appreciated.

The Financial Report for 2024 vs 2023 is included for your review. Any questions or concerns, please contact us. If you wish to donate, envelopes have been placed in each of our six Churches. Drop these into the Collection Basket in your parishes or place them in the Poor Boxes of your church and your parish administrator will pass on to us. Alternatively, and more efficiently, a direct deposit can be made to the **SVdP Society** with the **BNTB - BMD 20006060476711100** or **USD 8400784730010.**

On behalf of the patrons we assist and our SVdP Committee, we wish you a happy, healthy, joyful, and prayer-filled Advent as you prepare for the birth of our Lord. We also take this opportunity to thank everyone and to wish everyone a very Blessed and Merry Christmas and much happiness, joy, good health and prosperity in 2026.

The Committee of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

INCOME & EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
Income		
Reserved Funds - Diocese	15,000	15,000
Donations-in-kind (Vouchers)	-	1,000
In Memory	1,450	2,275
General	53,630	46,808
Total Donations	70,080	65,083
Donations-Poor Box		
St. Anthony's Church	494	238
St. Joseph's Church	495	365
St. Michael's Church	1,166	1,713
St. Patrick's Church	4,633	8,000
St. Theresa's Cathedral	5,780	7,380
Stella Maris Church	-	267
Donations - Poor Box	12,568	17,963
Interest income	280	10
Total Income	82,928	83,056
Expense		
Food Voucher Programmes:		
Christmas Voucher Programme	42,575	37,350
General Voucher Programme	22,525	20,000
Total Food Vouchers	65,100	57,350
Loaves & Fishes Programme	27,822	24,757
Client Assistance - Hardship	7,093	6,044
Administration Expenses:		
Bank charges	911	211
Digicel - SVDP Cell Phone	144	132
Nonprofit Alliance of Bermuda	100	100
Printing Expense	-	186
Registered Charity Fee	275	275
Misc - Retreat & PC Repair	-	400
	1,430	1,304
Donation - Hall Usage	1,200	1,200
Total Expense	102,645	90,655
Net Income (Loss)	**(19,717)**	**(7,599)**