



Close Enough!

MIGUEL DULICK

It is the fourth Sunday of Advent. When Christmas is this close, one takes that final leap. Isaiah is centuries from Christmas, but he cannot wait! He sees the “sign” as clear as day: “the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son” (Isaiah 7:14). And how about that Son! None other than “Emmanuel” himself—God-With-Us! Paul, too, is bursting at the seams! Inspired by what he calls “the obedience of faith” (Romans 5), he is excited to see the gospel thriving even among the Gentiles. For him, the “Spirit of holiness” is a gift offered to all—Christmas every day, you might say.

Speaking of “obedience of faith,” Joseph is the perfect example. The word “obey” comes from the same root as “to hear,” and Joseph has almost supernatural ears! Matthew, the former tax collector, tells “how the birth of Jesus Christ came about” in today’s gospel reading like a bookkeeper—the Holy Spirit in Column A, Joseph in Column B, with Mary in the middle. But when an angel whispers to Joseph at night, his dream comes true: “he took his wife into his home.” Everything is set for Emmanuel!

So, the Bible is brimming with Christmas, that is, “God-With-Us,” from end to end. And when a virgin can conceive, are any of us exempt from “birthing” Jesus in our midst? Even when a “happy holiday” seems impossible in the midst of war or violence or poverty, when our ears hear only silence, let’s sing Christmas carols every day! ●



SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
AUTHOR
MIGUEL
DULICK

Reflect

How am I at listening? Can I find new insights in old stories that I think I know so well?



The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus.”

MATTHEW 1:20–21



St. Anthony's Church

26 Middle Road -Warwick WK03, Bermuda
Phone: (Office Direct Line) 441-238-1784

Parish Email: stanthonybermuda@gmail.com

Father Jacob Swapan Gomes-Pastor

Telephone Number – 292-0607 Ext. 5

Cell Number -- 704-1874

Reconciliation: By appointment

Baptisms: By Appointment – One month in advance

Weddings: By Appointment –A year in advance

Organist: Jane Farge

St. Anthony's Club (CCD): Fridays 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Coordinator: Anna Daniel 441-236-2438

Email: stanthonyccd@yahoo.com

St. Vincent de Paul Rep: Pat Rodrigues

St. Vincent de Paul No. 525-1191

Mass Schedule at St. Anthony's

Dec	20	6:15 pm	Manuel Moura+
Dec	21	11:30 am	Bernardino Moura Moreira+
Dec	22	8:30 am	
Dec	23	8:30 am	
Dec	24	8:30 am	
Dec	25	8:30 am	Tony Bari+
Dec	26	8:30 am	
Dec	27	6:15 pm	Souls in Purgatory
Dec	28	11:30 am	Parishioners of St. Anthony

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to serve as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, collection counters, etc. If you can assist, kindly let a member of the Parish Council know or Pat Rodrigues at 524-1026.

Hospital Visits by Father Jacob

If you have any relative or friend in the hospital who would like Father Jacob to visit with/without the Sacrament of the Sick, kindly inform Father of their names and room numbers.

Lector's Workbooks

Lector's workbooks for the new liturgical year 2026 are available in the Sacristy

Bulletin for December 20/December 21, 2025

Weekly Collections at St. Anthony's

Dec 6/Dec 7 \$ 891.00

Dec 13/Dec 14 \$ 2,609.00

Online payments can be made directly into the Bank account of St. Anthony's – Butterfield Bank –
BD \$ Current A/c – 20006060061567100 and
US \$ Current A/c - 20006840061567100.

Please make sure to indicate what the donation is for in the memo field when making the payment online – i.e., General collection; Maintenance; Mission Sunday, etc. Multiple payments can be made for those times when you are away or on vacation. Please note that we are charged \$20 for US checks drawn on a US Bank. Kindly **do not** place Canadian or British currency or any old Bermuda currency in the collection baskets.

Maintenance Collection – first weekend of the month

Counting Schedule:

This week: Annette and Anna

Next week: Annette and Jackie

Pastor's Christmas Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Jesus came on earth to give us the message of love, joy, and happiness. He asks us to love one another, to be reconciled to one another, and to accept one another, regardless of our differences. All of us have been given a special gift, a sacred responsibility, to show others how the mystery of God is among us. I am so grateful for how you have greeted me in my few short months here in Bermuda; I thank all those who have welcomed me. I will hold you in my heart and prayers this Christmas season, asking God to bless you with courage and peace.

The heart of the Christmas story is that in Jesus 'God has visited his people.' Let us make him welcome. I pray for all that the grace of the Christmas message will brighten our lives, renew our faith, and strengthen our relationships and friendships. The message of the Christ-Child is a message of peace, integrity, and hope. It is a message that our world needs to hear, especially today.

At St. Anthony's, we see a few volunteers trying to work in diverse ways to continue to forward the message of Jesus. On a personal level, I am uplifted and encouraged by the number of people who attend Church and continue to support our parishes. As pastor I am inspired by the number of people who are available to support me. In truth, volunteers are the heart of the parish. Working together we continue to aim to have parishes that are inclusive and

Synodal churches of the Pilgrims of Hope where all feel welcome.

The message of Christmas keeps hope alive in our hearts because it is a message that tells us *God-is-with-us*, Emmanuel. We pray that the presence of the Christ-Child will grace your home during this Christmas season and throughout the coming year. As we celebrate the birth of our Savior at Christmas, I pray that the light of Christ will shine in the hearts and homes of all, especially the families of St. Anthony's. Jesus is the Light which is the hope and joy of all humankind throughout the world, the radiant light of God's glory, the glory of the Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. He is the "Reason for the Season."

This Christmas, my first in Bermuda, I will be holding you all in heart and prayer throughout the joyous season, asking God to bless you with courage and peace. Please, do not forget to say thank you to Him for all the blessings that He has bestowed on you during the year. I also express my heartfelt gratitude to our dear Most Rev. Bishop Wes of the Diocese of Hamilton in Bermuda for inviting and appointing me as the pastor at St. Anthony's parish.

Please pray for me on the New Year of Peace and the 37th Anniversary of my sacerdotal/priestly Ordination and Ministry.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Jacob

Bishop's Corner

Dear Fellow-Catholics,

At times I flee into poetry because I am convinced that poems are able to capture something that is uncapturable otherwise. So I decided to express my Christmas greetings this year with the help of *The First Christmas* poem by Marian Swinger:

**It never snows at Christmas in that dry and dusty land.
Instead of freezing blizzards, there are palms and drifting
sands,
and years ago a stable and a most unusual star
and three wise men who followed it, by camel, not by car,
while, sleepy on the quiet hills, a shepherd gave a cry.
He'd seen a crowd of angels in the silent starlit sky.
In the stable, ox and ass stood very still and calm
and gazed upon the baby, safe and snug in Mary's arms.
And Joseph, lost in shadows, face lit by an oil lamp's glow
stood wondering, that first Christmas Day, two thousand
years ago.**

In the middle of snowy decorations with reindeers, penguins, snowman, Santa, and all the noise of unending shopping, company parties, overwhelming commerce, I urge you, us, myself, to stop for a while at the manger with the Baby who changed the world, and to stop there with

awe and wonder of the Divine who became human, and to get motivated to live our humanity beautifully in order to make our world more human and more fraternal, in what depends on you, us, myself...

A Blessed Christmas to all of us!

Bishop Wes

Important Messages

Please be advised that during the winter season St. Theresa's Cathedral will be locked at 4:00 pm from Monday to Friday.

St Vincent de Paul Poor Box Donations

Please use: BDA # 2000 6060 4767 11100 or US # 8400 7847 30010

Cash donation - please use the SVDP envelopes and place in the collection baskets at the weekend Masses. Any amount donated goes a long way to support those in need.

Reverse Advent Calendar

During the 2025 Advent season, parishes throughout our Diocese are asked to support a "Reverse Advent Calendar Food Drive". Each day of Advent, add one item to your collection box. By Christmas, you will have a food basket which will be donated to those in need. Collection of food baskets in each parish will be coordinated by the parish St. Vincent de Paul representative on the weekend of Jan 3/4. Last year's collection provided enough supplies to feed those in need through March, which is fantastic. Thank you to all those who participated. If you have any questions, please contact Elaine Kelly at 236-4613 or ekelly@ibl.bm.

Jesse Tree by FRIDAY CLUB/CCD

The Jesse tree was decorated by our Friday Club children, and it is dedicated to Raymond Tannock.

Midnight Christmas Mass

There will be a wine and cheese celebration after midnight Christmas mass. Parishioners are welcome to contribute cheese, crackers or a bottle of Prosecco.

Dear Padre,

I went to confession, and then, months later, my priest was removed for alcoholism and theft. Is my confession still worthy?

Your confession is not dependent on the worthiness or the unworthiness of the priest. Your confession is made to Jesus; the priest is a witness who pronounces the words of absolution that Jesus intended in the sacrament.

“From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1128).

The question of the efficacy of the sacrament and the unworthiness of the minister who performs the sacrament in the name of the Church is not new. During the time of persecution, in the early centuries of the Church, some people, including priests and bishops, avoided martyrdom by offering the required oblation to Caesar. Later, they repented and returned to the Christian community, a community that included the surviving family and friends of the men and women who were martyred. The question was asked, and with some animated energy, “How could these ministers who sinned to save their own lives now represent the Church?” The answer, arrived at with patience and discernment, is that the minister is only the representative of the sacrament, not the source of the sacrament. Jesus is faithful, even when his ministers have been unfaithful. ●



GEMINI

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

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV



I think it is important for all of us to learn how to listen more, to enter into dialogue. First and foremost, with the Lord: always listen to the word of God. Then also listen

to others, to know how to build bridges, to know how to listen without judging, not closing the doors [and] thinking that we have all the truth and no one else can tell us anything.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 11, 2025

Monday

December 22
Advent Weekday
1 Sm 1:24–28
Lk 1:46–56

Tuesday

December 23
Advent Weekday
Mal 3:1–4, 23–24
Lk 1:57–66

Wednesday

December 24
Advent Weekday
2 Sm 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16
Lk 1:67–79

Thursday

December 25
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
Is 52:7–10
Heb 1:1–6
Jn 1:1–18 or 1:1–5, 9–14

Friday

December 26
St. Stephen, the First Martyr
Acts 6:8–10;
7:54–59
Mt 10:17–22

Saturday

December 27
St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
1 Jn 1:1–4
Jn 20:1a, 2–8

Sunday

December 28
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
Sir 3:2–6, 12–14
Col 3:12–21 or 3:12–17
Mt 2:13–15, 19–23

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to **DearPadre.org** to send your question and to learn more about **Dear Padre**.