Dear Padre,

A friend of mine took his life. He was a very staunch Catholic. His wife wanted to know if he could be buried or have a Mass in the Catholic Church.

Yes, your friend should most certainly receive a Catholic funeral and burial. "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God



can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2283).

A person who is suffering with a mental illness or disorder, certainly a prerequisite for suicide, may not have the necessary mental freedom to choose something that is understood as grave or mortal. In other words, he or she does not have the necessary requirements for full and free consent of the will.

Not that long ago, suicide was often misunderstood. Thankfully, today we understand the havoc and suffering of mental illness, and that a person can be a victim, even if it might look like he or she is not. The great suffering of those who take their own lives must not be dismissed or discarded. The family members and friends of a person who suffers suicide should also not be judged but should only receive compassion and understanding. They, too, are victims, in the fullest sense of the word and in the truest understanding of what it means to be a fragile human being. Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV



Young people of our time, like those of every age, are a volcano of life, energy, sentiments, and ideas. It can be seen from the wonderful things they are able to do, in so

many fields. However, they also need help in order for this great wealth to grow in harmony and to overcome what...can still hinder their healthy development.

ADDRESS, ROME, MAY 15, 2025

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Do you have a question for the Padre?

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

January 1

of God

Nm 6:22-27

Gal 4:4-7

Friday

January 2

Sts. Basil the

Great and Gregory

Bishops and Doctors

Lk 2:16-21

Monday December 29 Octave of Christmas 1 Jn 2:3–11 Lk 2:22–35
Tuesday December 30

Octave of Christmas 1 Jn 2:12-17 Lk 2:36-40

Wednesday December 31

Octave of Christmas 1 Jn 2:18-21 Jn 1:1-18

Thursday Saturday

January 3 Solemnity of Mary, Christmas Weekday the Holv Mother 1 Jn 2:29-3:6 Jn 1:29-34

Sunday

January 4 The Epiphany of the Lord Is 60:1-6 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12

of the Church 1 Jn 2:22-28 Jn 1:19-28

Nazianzen,

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Our Parish

he certainly acts on what he hears.

December 28, 2025

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (A)



Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 / Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 / Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Embracing a Spirituality of Listening

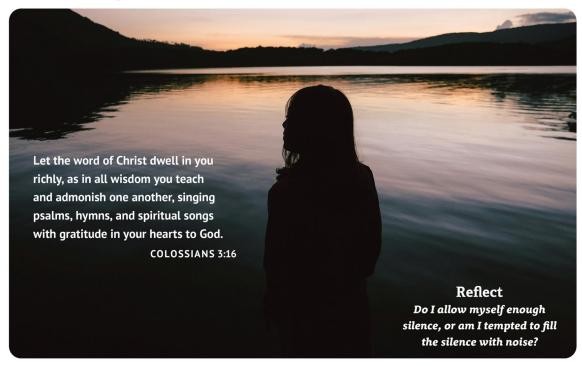
ANN M. GARRIDO

he most treasured prayer of Jesus' people has long been and remains the Shema: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is God. The Lord is One." Jewish spirituality is grounded not in seeing or touching or tasting, but in hearing. No one exemplifies fidelity to this way of being in the world more than Joseph, as evidenced in today's gospel. Joseph is one who listens to what God's messenger says to him and immediately acts on it. He responds to the call to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Then, he responds to the call to return home with his family to Israel. As many have noted, Joseph never speaks in Scripture, but he certainly listens, and

Christmas is perhaps the noisiest season of the year. At gatherings of family and friends with festive music in the background, it often feels as if we are shouting over one another to be heard. It is a season when it can be hard to have deep conversations, even with God. Indeed, it can be such a busy season that sometimes our regular prayer practices fall by the wayside. But, if we do not make space in our daily lives to listen, might we miss messages that are important,

LEARN ABOUT **AUTHOR** ANN M. GARRIDO

even urgent, for us to hear, as in the case of today's gospel? Messages that require immediate response? What would it look like to carve out a bit of silence in this holiday season, to be like Joseph and reground yourself in a spirituality of listening?



"We at St. Mary & Joseph Parishes strive for a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ through Scripture and Sacraments, form missionary disciples, and send them forth to transform the world."

Our Three-Parish Cluster Sts. Mary and Joseph Catholic Churches Lone Tree, Nichols and Hills

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

December 28, 2025

Church of St. Mary, 201 Short Street, Box B, Nichols, Iowa, 52766 319-330-5324 St. Mary Church, 216 West Jayne Street, Box 416, Lone Tree, Iowa, 52755 319-629-4225 St. Joseph Church, 209 Brady Street, PO Box 187, Hills, Iowa, 52235 319-679-2271

Sts. Mary and Joseph Cluster Parish Office 209 Brady Street, P.O. Box 187 Hills, Iowa 52235-0187

Music Ministry: St. Joseph, Hills: Lily Westemeyer, Robynn Anderson. Church of St. Mary, Nichols: Jean Mengel and Rhonda Meredith

St. Mary, Lone Tree: Steve Moore.

St. Joseph Prayer Line: Lucille Duwa 679-2404; Joan Gringer 679-2406 Church of St. Mary, Nichols Prayer Line: Carol Kaalberg, 319-330-5324

St. Mary, Lone Tree Prayer Line: Nancy Ford, 319-430-0882

Cluster Mass Intentions December 27 to January 4

Saturday	December 27	4:00 PM	Lone Tree	Requested Intentions
Sunday	December 28	8:00 AM 10:00 AM	Nichols Hills	Requested Intentions Marvin Simon
Monday	December 29	8:00 AM	Lone Tree R	Leonard&Dorothy Cooney
Tuesday	December 30	8:00 AM 8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Lone Tree R Atrium PP CC	Gayle Kaalberg Carl Mellecker Cluster Parishioners
Wednesday	December 31	All Masses		Requested Intentions
Thursday	January 1	All Masses		Requested Intentions
Friday	January 2	8:30 AM	Atrium	LeonardMaryERummelhart
Saturday	January 3	4:00 PM	Lone Tree	Russell Hotz
Sunday	January 4	8:00 AM 10:00 AM	Nichols Hills	Requested Intentions LeonardMaryERummelhart

Atrium , Atrium Village Chapel, Atrium Village, Hills.

PP CC, Pioneer Park Care Center located at Pioneer Park Villa, Lone Tree.

Lone Tree R, St. Mary Rectory in Lone Tree.

Confession Schedule

Father David is available to hear confessions before Mass at these times:

St. Mary, Lone Tree
Saturday 3:30 to 3:50 pm
Church of St. Mary Nichols
Sunday 7:30 to 7:50 am
St. Joseph, Hills
Sunday 9:30 to 9:50 am
Let us come to reconcile to God

and others!

Comments from Father David Paintsil:

Page 6 December 28, 2025



Diocese of Davenport

Office of the Bishop

December 8, 2025

Re: Province Decree on the Offerings and on the intentions of the Holy Masses

Dear Fathers.

At a meeting of the Presbyteral Council on May 13, 2025, the question was raised as to the possibility and the feasibility of increasing the offerings of the faithful for celebration of the Eucharist for their intentions. It was the consensus of the Council that I should raise the question of Mass Offerings on the Province level.

Following our Council discussion, I raised the question at our monthly province meeting. At that time, the other Bishops of Iowa requested additional time to consult with their own Presbyteral Councils.

At a meeting of the Province on October 20, 2025, the four bishops of Iowa agreed on raising the suggested offerings from \$5 per intention to \$10. Archbishop Zinkula, Metropolitan of the Province of Dubuque, issued a decree on November 19, 2025 (Decree enclosed).

With the promulgation of this decree, I encourage all priests to re-acquaint themselves with the law that governs Mass offerings, in particular Canon law. One should also reacquaint themselves regarding the acceptance of "Collective Offerings,", i.e. Mos iugiter obtinuit (February 22, 1991) and Sulla disciplina delle intenzione delle Sante Messe (April 13, 2025).

This decree authorizes that after January 1, 2026, the suggested Mass Offering will rise from \$5 to \$10. That being said, any Mass offerings already accepted at the previous suggested donation of \$5 must be fulfilled at that offering level.

Please call the chancery if you need any further clarification.

Fraternally,

Most Rev. Dennis G. Walsh Bishop of Davenport

+ Dennis Will

780 W. Central Park Ave. • Davenport, Iowa 52804-1901 • 563-324-1911 • Fax 563-324-5842 • bishop@davenportdiocese.org

Bible Study

Bible Study will meet January 13 & 27 at Atrium Village, 2nd floor study/lounge at 6:30 PM. Contact Melody Hobert-Mellecker—319-936-3287, call or text — if you are interested, or just come!



The 25-26 Annual Diocesan Appeal **Parish Goals:**

Hills = \$11,405.00 ... Pledged to date, \$12,345 (108% of goal). Lone Tree = \$11,065 ... Pledged to date, \$11,115 (104% of goal). Nichols= \$8,114.00 ... Pledged to date, \$8,977 (111% of goal).



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO HELPED MEET OUR GOALS!

If you haven't given to the ADA yet, please do, any funds beyond our goal go back to the parish.



A big **THANK YOU** to all who generously donated to our community "Secret Santa" project. You helped to make Christmas special for many!

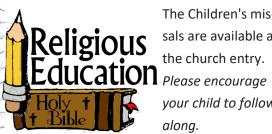


Father Bill Kneemiller's Land's End Rugs

To support our local food pantries!

scrap materials. Your goodwill donation to purchase rug(s)will go towards our local food pantries. Rugs can be found in parish hall.

ease put your donation for rug(s) in an envelope marked RUG DONATION, and put in collection basket at Mass. Make checks payable to St. Joseph Church or St. Mary Church. Funds will be dispersed to appropriate food pantry.



The Children's missals are available at the church entry. your child to follow along.

Cycle A Reading Liturgical Ministers—Lone Tree St. Mary Saturday 4:00 pm

	12/27/25 Fr. David	12/31/25 Fr. Lou	01/03/2026 Fr. Lou	01/10/26 Fr. David	Lone Tree	Parish Support
Greeter	Barb Dunsmore		Carter Parrish	Virginia Schlapkohl	Envelopes	\$1,544.00
Lector	Jill Welter	Carol Kaalberg	Landon Parrish	Jerry Ford	Offertory	\$63.00
Cross Bearer	Lynn Bland		Logan Parrish	Nancy Ford	ACH	\$215.00
Servers	Jill Welter	Carol Kaalberg	Trudi Westfall/Maggie Anderson	Jerry Ford	Christmas	\$50.00
Eucharist	Sherry Nicola	Carol Kaalberg	Trudi Westfall	Jerry Ford		
Eucharist	Judy Grothe		Sherry Nicola	Nancy Ford		
Collection	Joan Davis	Volunteer	Dani Parrish	Glen Gerot		
	Lynn Bland	Volunteer	Carter Parrish	Betty Gerot		
Gifts	Joan, Lynn	Volunteer	Dani & Carter Parrish	Betty & Glen Gerot		
Commentator	Jill Welter	Carol Kaalberg	Trudi Westfall	Jerry Ford		

Liturgical Ministers—Nichols Church of St. Mary Sunday 8:00 am Cycle A Reading

	12/28/2025 Fr. David	01/01/2026 Fr. David	01/04/2026 Fr. David	01/11/2026 Fr. David	Nichols	Parish Support
Greeter	Joe Harper	Wayne Mengel	Wayne Mengel	Wayne Mengel	Envelopes	\$585.00
Lector	Renetta Burlage	Carol Kaalberg	Renetta Burlage	Trudi Westfall	Offertory	\$70.00
Cross Bearer	Michael Burlage		Michael Burlage	Adam Gauger	ACH	\$250.00
Server	Carol Kaalberg	Carol Kaalberg	Carol Kaalberg	Trudi Westfall	Christmas	\$150.00
Eucharist	Carol Kaalberg		Carol Kaalberg	Trudi Westfall		
Eucharist	Missy Lenz	Carol Kaalberg	Adam Gauger	Missy Lenz		
Collection	Joe Harper		David Ollendick	Dennis Truesdale		
	Dennis Truesdale		Kory Kaalberg	Wayne Mengel		
Gifts	Brent & Meaghan Peters		Dennis Truesdale	Mary Lou Yedlik		
Commentator	Carol Kaalberg	Carol Kaalberg	Carol Kaalberg	Trudi Westfall		

Liturgical Ministers—Hills St. Joseph Sunday 10:00 am Cycle A Reading

	12/28/2025 Fr. David	12/31/2025 Fr. David	01/01/2026 Fr. David	01/04/2026 Fr. David	Hills	Parish Support
Music Ministry	Choir	VOLUNTEERS	VOLUNTEER	Robynn Anderson	Envelopes	\$340.00
Greeter	Liz & Rich Lockhart	PLEASE	Marcia Mellecker	Jim & Hope Frantz	Offertory	\$117.00
Lector	Wendy Berry	SIGN UP	VOLUNTEER	Nancy Waldschmidt	ACH	\$535.00
Server	Mike Sieverding	Jean Burr, Messi Akodegnon	Jean Burr	Carol Kirkpatrick Wendy Berry	Retired Religious	\$5.00
Eucharist -host	Carol Kirkpatrick		VOLUNTEER	Deanne Eden	Immac Concept	\$10.00
Eucharist - cup	Kristee Malmberg		VOLUNTEER	Arlene Johnston	Christmas	\$52.00
Eucharist - cup	Deanne Eden		VOLUNTEER	Bob Jenn		
Collection	Marcia Mellecker		Marcia Mellecker	Mike Sieverding		
	Barbara Mahanna		VOLUNTEER	Lora Sieverding		
Gifts	Family of Marvin Simon		Marcia Mellecker	Rummelhart family		
Commentator	Lora Sieverding		Carol Kirkpatrick	Lora Sieverding		

If you are unavailable for the above ministry assignment, please find your own replacement. Thank you.

December 28, 2025

St. Mary Church, Lone Tree and Nichols

Bulletin deadline Tuesday at 10:00 am. Contact Lora Sieverding at 319-530-5560, hillsstjosephfin@diodav.org or Carol Kaalberg at 319-330-5324 or kaalbergc@diodav.org.

St. Joseph Church, Hills.

St. Joseph Food Pantry is open each Wednesday morning from 10 am to noon. Mike and Lucy Parker direct our food pantry and can be reached at 319-679-2420.



The Social Justice Committee has a Giving Tree at the church entrance. There are tags on the tree to various organizations. Please take a tag to an organization you would like to donate to, place the tag and your donation in an envelope and place in our collection basket.

Annual Altar & Rosary Parish Potluck was held Sunday, December 14th, following Mass. Due to weather



issues it was less attended than usual, but those who did make it had great food, good fellowship and some fun door prizes. Thank you to Altar & Rosary for hosting such a fun event.





Lone Tree Food Pantry is open each Wednesday afternoon from 3:30-5:00 PM. For more information, please call 319-629-4900.

Nichols Parish Council & Finance Council: Next meeting will be Sunday, January 25, following Mass at the church.

Lone Tree Parish Council: Next meeting will be Monday, January 26 at 6:00 PM, NOTE: this is a new date and time.



For your convenience Parish Council Minutes are now being posted on the bulletin board at the church entry.



Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God New Year's Eve Mass, Wednesday, Dec. 31 4:00 pm at Lone Tree Church, Fr. Lou 6:00 pm at Hills Church, Fr. David

New Year's Day Mass, Thursday, Jan. 1 8:00 an at Nichols Church, Fr. David 10:00 am at Hills Church, Fr. David

There will be no First Saturday of the Month Mass of Healing on January 3.

The office staff of our Sts. Mary and Joseph Cluster Parishes wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!





Eucharistic Adoration Will begin again on Wednesday, **January 7, 2026**

2025 Christmas Memorial Flowers and Mass Intentions

Your requested intentions will be offered at Masses on December 24, 25, 31 and January 1.

St. Mary Lone Tree

Cheryl Ann Anderson John Bachhuber Eugene & Rose Barnett

Carol Bekker Doralyn Benson Katie Birtcher

W.S & Evanageline Bouquot

Wilma & James Buline Donna Crawford Dean & Alice Cole

Ron Cole

Leonard & Dorothy Cooney Thomas & Elma Cooney

Kathy Dalton Donna Davis Kathy Davis Mark Davis Denny DeGroote

George & Becky Elster

Gerald Forbes Sammy Grant

Harold & Genny Griffith

Don Hanks Cindy Hartley Linda Hartley

Luther & Norma Hartley

Richard Haval Milly Hora Donald Hotz

Russell & Doris Hotz

Rita Jansen Gary Klebe Linda Klebe Marvin Klebe

Mildred & Laurence Klebe

Donald M. Kout

Oswald & Victoria Kout

Robert S. Kout

Benjamin S. & Ruth Lawson Diana Sue & Kay Lawson

Jim Lively
Francis Loan

Hazen & Irene Loan

Scott Lorack

George & Elizabeth McGuire

Michael McGuire, Jr. Michael McGuire, Sr. Jim & Donabell Moore

Max Mudd Bonnie Mullinnix

Frank O'Meara

Charles & Kevin Mullinnix

LeRoy Mullinnix Harold Mullinnix Pat & Shirely Mullinnix Clayton & Colton Novak

Mary Piernicky Lynn Rockafellow Doris Ruth Jerry Schindler John & Albia Shradel Mary Rita Shradel

Rudolph, Bert & Jerry Simon

Kathleen Slycord Earl & Viola Tessmer Joanne Tessmer Jolene Vance James E. Walker

Marjorie & Marvin Walker

Bob & Jean Welter Kevin Welter

Rufus & Dorothy Welter Tom & Bill Welter Paul Yedlik

Living & Deceased of the following:

Anderson family

Droll & Schalpkohl families Buline & Poeltler families Forbes & Westfall families

Grant family

Kelly & Viner families

Krueger family

Lively & Fitzgerald families
James Mullinnix family
Mullinnix & Cooney families
Lydia & Arthur Schreiber family

Welter family Velma Wiese family Yakish families

2025 Christmas Memorial Flowers and Mass Intentions

Your requested intentions will be offered at Masses on December 24, 31 and January 1, 4.

Church of St. Mary Nichols

Robert Cooper Donna Crawford Aaron Daufeldt

Clarence & Frances Daufeldt

Gary Daufeldt Katie Dlouhy Mary Fouchek Fr. Marty Goetz

Mr. & Mrs. William Gordon

Dr. John Grostic
Don Hanks
Gayle Kaalberg
Sean Krueger
Tim Leggins
Henry Logee
Louis & Amy Matt
James McGee
Michael McGee
Robert Mengel

Sonny, Karleen & Tom O'Toole

Keith Peters

Jack & Helene Salemink

Jennifer Salemink

Lawrence & Geneva Salemink

Joe & Anita Schmelzer
John Schneider

Fr. Guillermo Trevino

Robert Varney Ann Wieskamp

Special Intentions of Healing

Peace in the World

Living & Deceased of the following:

Church of St. Mary Nichols
Balland & Green families
Bowron & Martin families
Burlage & Salemink families
Forbes & Westfall families
Joe & Rose Harper family
Kaalberg & Milder families
Massey & Lampe families
Charles Ollendick family
Poeltler & Lisenby families
Eugene Salemink family
Sieren & Beinhart families
Truesdale family
Varney & Gordon families
Wilson & Beauseigneur families

Paul Yedlik family



2025 Christmas Memorial Flowers and Mass Intentions

Your requested intentions will be offered at Masses on December 24, 25, 31 and January 1.

St. Joseph Hills

Clarence and Mary Amelon

Earl and Mary Ball

Ivan Ball Judy Ball Richard Ball

Hazen and Lavilla Barker Paul & Shirley Beltz Vincent & Lucinda Beltz

Virginia Brass Art Campbell Kevin Campbell

Don, Shirley and John Clausen

Kohen James Cole
Dick and Rosie Cress
Bud and Florance Curran
LeRoy Duwa Families
Adolph and Rita Dvorsky

Willard Dvorsky

Charles and Hilma Eden William "Bill" Eden Eldon and Vera Frantz

Danny Fulton

Ralph and Doris Gerot Fr. Marty Goetz

Robert and Gertrude Greazel Bob and Bernice Grimm

Keith Grothe

Leo and Nettie Grothe Charles and Stella Hall Margaret Heitzman Nancy Heitzman Paul Heitzman Thomas Heitzman Virginia Heitzman

Gary Hotka

Wesley & Mary Ann Hotka Joe & Rita Jenn Family Theda Johnson

Djuana Kirkpatrick Joanne Kleese

Louis and Marion Klein Reno and Vivian Knebel Glenn and Gerry Lackender

Howard Lewis

Olin & Floraine Lloyd Maxine Lockhart

Pat Mass Don Mahanna Kevin Mahanna

Carl and Mary Malmberg

Albert Mellecker Bob Mellecker Carol Mellecker

Cletus and Rita Mellecker Leo and Lois Mellecker Betty, Jerry & Renee Metz

Mike Mills

Charles & Winefred Mulvehill Charles Ollendick family Virgil and Hazelle Parker

Bernie Prybil

George and Frances Rayner Bob and Gladys Richardson Bob & Renita Rummelhart

Leonard and Mary Evelyn Rummelhart

John Schneider Steve Schneider Bud & Mary Sieverding

Francis Simon Linda Simon

Marvin Simon Frank and Zelda Skala

Rick Soukup Keith Stevens

Louis and Adelaide Stevens, & Beverly

Kenneth Swenka

Henry & Dolores VanEschen

Ruby Gwen VanHorn Russell L. VanHorn William B. VanHorn Rev. Donald Waldschmidt Harold and Helen Waldschmidt Rev. Donald Waldschmidt

Harold and Helen Waldschmidt

2025 Christmas Memorial Flowers and Mass Intentions

Your requested intentions will be offered at Masses on December 24, 25, 31 and January 1.

St. Joseph Hills

Living & Deceased of the following:

Bowman family Bratt family

Eugene Cambridge family

Daufeldt family Albert Duwa family Laurence Duwa family

Frantz family Gauger family Kirkpatrick family Knebel family

Jerry Mellecker family Pogge family Popham family Schott family Sladek family Stebral family

Eugene Tolander family

