



Advent | Peace

Within our Catholic tradition, important symbols that capture the essence of Advent are the evergreen and the light. During Advent, both are used to create wreaths. The candles represent Jesus coming as the light in darkness. One candle is lit each Sunday until all four candles are lit, and sometimes a fifth candle is lit on Christmas. As Christmas draws nearer, each candle brings a little more light into the darkness, the light of Christ burns brighter and stronger as Christ's birth approaches.

At the beginning of our prayer you are invited to light a candle in contemplative anticipation for peace.

Peace & Love

Each of the candles represents an aspect of preparation during the season of Advent. Purple is the primary colour associated with Advent. Within the Catholic Church, it symbolises **penance, preparation, and sacrifice**. During Advent, we rejoice in the endless love that God has for us, which is made apparent in the birth of His son.

The "Angel's Candle" symbolises peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Be a beacon of hope in this turbulent world ... from homes that are a light on the hill.

The XXII General Chapter

Scripture

Luke 1: 26-38.

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Scripture Reflection

Pope Francis reflects on Luke's Gospel during Advent

We note a contrast between the Angel's promises and Mary's response. This contrast is manifested in the content of the expressions of the two characters. The Angel says to Mary: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end" (vv. 30-33). It's a long revelation. The child that will be born of this humble girl of Nazareth, will be called Son of the Most High: it's not possible to conceive a higher honour than this. After Mary's question, in asking for explanations, the Angel's revelation becomes even more detailed and astonishing.

In contrast, Mary's response is a brief phrase, which doesn't speak of glory, it doesn't speak of privilege, but only of willingness and service: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (v. 38). The content is also different. Mary doesn't elevate herself in face of the prospect of becoming, in fact, the Mother of the Messiah, but remains modest and expresses her own adherence to the Lord's plan. Mary doesn't boast. She is humble, she is modest. She acknowledges being little before God and is happy to be so. At the same time, she is aware that the realisation of God's plan depends on her answer, and that therefore she is called to adhere to it with her whole self.

Mary inspired Marcellin's style of being on mission. She received the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation and responded immediately to Elizabeth's need. In so doing, she shows us that contemplation and action are both indispensable elements of spirituality. Mary's way lays the foundation of all our actions: listening, patient waiting, nurturing interiority and responsiveness to God's will.

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Pray | The Examen



The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It is actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life.

It has five steps and it takes 15 to 20 minutes.

- 1. Ask God for light.**
I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.
- 2. Give thanks.**
The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.
- 3. Review the day.**
I carefully look back on the day, being guided by the Holy Spirit.
- 4. Face your shortcomings.**
I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.
- 5. Look toward the day to come.**
I ask where I need God in the day to come.