

Candle 5 The white candle at the centre of the wreath marks the **Birth of Jesus**, the true light who enlightens all people, a light that darkness cannot overpower.

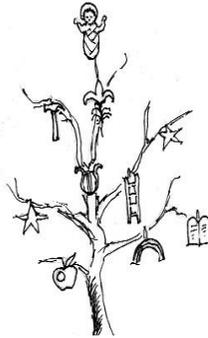
Advent Waiting

We are listening. We are watching. We are waiting in joyful hope for the coming of our saviour, Jesus Christ.

Gather your people, O God. Here in this time and this place, as we wait, as we hope, as we long for your coming, O God.

The Jesse Tree

This Jesse Tree reminds us of all family trees. They take us back a long way, back as far as we can go in the story of our family. This tree reminds us that Joseph and Mary were of the House of David. It reminds us that the roots of our Christian family tree, go back down into the story of the Jewish people and their agreement of love with God in the Old Testament. It reminds us of how long generations of people waited for the coming of Jesus. Now he is coming anew, this Christmas, and we must be awake so that we will not miss him when he comes. It reminds us of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. We decorate it during the weeks of Advent as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.



Fr. John McEneaney, C.C.

We welcome the recently ordained Fr. John McEneaney to St. Mary's and the neighbouring parishes. Fr. John was ordained in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford on Mission Sunday, 24th October 2021. Fr. John who worked for a number of years before beginning his studies for the priesthood brings his wide experience to his new ministry.

In an interview with the Dungarvan Observer shortly after his ordination (5/11/2021), Fr John said: 'It was only after coming to a better personal understanding of God, who knew and cared for me, who wants and knows what is best for me, that I began to develop a better prayer life, allowing my relationship with God to develop. Through this I was able to listen to what God wanted for me, which I know is to live a truly, happy, peaceful and fulfilled life.' We warmly welcome Fr. John, and we will do all we can to help him settle in his new surroundings.

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St. Mary's Parish Dungarvan

December 2021

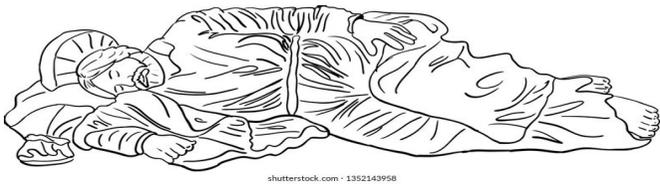


Advent Newsletter

Advent: "Please: Let us Wait"

As a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, Advent is undermined by the premature way we now celebrate it. We can't wait so Christmas is brought forward, undermining the whole purpose of Advent which is the time of waiting. Everybody knows what Christmas is going to be like so why wait? But Joseph and Mary and Jesus didn't know what Christmas was going to be like and they had to wait. For Joseph the time of waiting was an anxious time of worry and insecurity. For Mary it was a time of sickness and discomfort and the fear of miscarriage. For Jesus in the womb it was a time of complete and utter helplessness. We think of Christmas as the moment of the God-man being born. We tend to forget the months before when Mary carried him in the womb. Humanly speaking this may have been the greatest indignity of all because, just think of it. No separate body, no body at all. The Son of God a haphazard fertilization, a shapeless amoeba, no personal identity, utterly dependent, confined and dark, hidden in the womb. Womb and tomb because as it happened, Jesus died the same way. Confined and dependent. No comeliness in him nor strength, unrecognizable, a worm and no man. Utterly helpless. What does it tell us? It tells us in starkest terms how seriously God took our helplessness, the helpless God, showing our helplessness to ourselves. It confronts us with our smallness. Our dependence, our vulnerability, our limitations. But the human condition has been given a new value, made precious because Christ has shared it all and the precious is always mixed with the precarious. **So please, let us wait.**

Fr Ronan Drury: From Selected Writings. P.70.



**Part of Pope Francis’
Reflection on St. Joseph
at Weekly Audience,
17/11/2021.**

There are more than ten people in the Bible who bear the name Joseph... **The name Joseph is Hebrew for “may God increase, may God give growth”.** It is a wish, a blessing based on trust in God’s providence and referring especially to fertility and to raising children. Indeed, this very name reveals to us an essential aspect of Joseph of Nazareth’s personality. He is a man full of faith in God, in his providence. His every action, as recounted in the Gospel, is dictated by the certainty that God “gives the growth”, “increases”, “adds”: that is, that God provides for the continuation of his plan of salvation. And in this, Joseph of Nazareth is very similar to Joseph of Egypt.

The first geographical reference to Joseph, Bethlehem and Nazareth, also assume an important role in our understanding of him.

In the Old Testament, the city of Bethlehem is called *Beth Lechem*, “House of bread”. *In the light of the story of Jesus, this reference to bread refers to the mystery of the Eucharist: Jesus is the living bread descended from heaven (cf. Jn 6:51). He will say of himself: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”. (Jn 6:54).*

The choice of Bethlehem and Nazareth tells us that the periphery and marginality are preferred by God - two outlying villages, far from the clamour of the news and the powers of the time... Jesus goes in search of sinners; he goes into their homes, speaks with them, calls them to conversion. But he goes in search also of those who have done no evil but have suffered it: the sick, the hungry, the poor, the least.

In this respect, the society of that time is not very different from ours. Today, too, there is a centre and a periphery. And the Church knows that she is called to proclaim the good news from the periphery. Joseph, who is a carpenter from Nazareth and who trusts in God’s plan for his young fiancée and for himself, reminds the Church to keep her eyes on what the world deliberately ignores from Nazareth.

He reminds each of us to consider important what others discard. In this sense he is truly a master of the essential: he reminds us that what truly matters does not attract our attention but requires patient discernment to be discovered and appreciated.

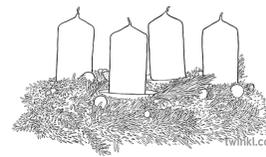
Let us ask him to intercede so that the whole Church may recover this insight, this ability to discern and evaluate what is essential. Let us start again from Bethlehem, let us start again from Nazareth.

May you find in Saint Joseph the witness and protector to look to. We can turn to him with this prayer:

**Saint Joseph,
you who have always trusted God,
and have made your choices
guided by his providence
teach us not to count so much on our own
plans
but on his plan of love.
You who come from the peripheries
help us to convert our gaze
and to prefer what the world discards and
marginalises.
Comfort those who feel alone
and support those who work silently
to defend life and human dignity. Amen.**



The Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath with its increasing light mirrors our increasing joy and build-up during the weeks of Advent. Its evergreen branches remind us that God is unchanging and his love lasts forever. Its circular shape reminds us that God is without beginning or end. Sometimes the candles are given names which focus our minds on aspects of Advent – hope, love, joy, peace and light.

Candle 1: The Candle of Hope is also called the Prophets’ Candle.

In Advent the prophets look forward to the coming of the saviour. They give hope to their people.

Candle 2: The Candle of Peace is also called the Angels’ Candle.

The angels sing of glory to God and peace to his people.

Candle 3: The Candle of Joy (Pink) is also called the Shepherds’ Candle. The shepherds share the joy of Jesus’ birth.

Candle 4: The Candle of Love is also called the Bethlehem Candle.

God’s love became one of us in the Child of Bethlehem.