

THE JESSE TREE SYMBOLS AND STORY

The symbol of the Jesse Tree comes from Isaiah: "The royal line of David is like a tree that has been cut down; but just as new branches sprout from a stump, so a new king will arise from among David's descendants." The tree is named after Jesse, the father of the great King David of the Old Testament.

THE FIRST WEEK

The symbols for our Jesse Tree start with the first stories found in the Bible -

- God's **creation** of the world (Gen 1:26-31),
- and of **Adam and Eve** (Gen 3:1-7),
- Next is the wonderful story of **Noah** and his ark full of animals (Gen 6:11-22 9:8-13),
- The saga of God's chosen people begins with the promises he made to **Abraham** (Gen 12:1-7, Heb 11:8),
- to **Isaac** (Gen 22:1-7), whose life was spared,
- and to **Jacob** (Gen 28:10-22), whose 12 sons became the people of Israel.
- God's concern for his people is expressed again through the story of **Joseph** and his coat of many colors (Gen 37:1-4).

THE SECOND WEEK

- The week begins with **Moses** the leader of the Jewish people during their great exodus from slavery in Egypt (Ex 20:1-17).
- He was helped in this endeavor by his brother **Aaron** (Ex 5:22, 11:5).
- The story of their search for the Promised Land continued with **Joshua** and the battle of Jericho (Jsh 6:20).
- Later, God again intervened by sending his people **Samson**, a leader of incredible strength (Jdg 16:21-30).
- The symbols continue with the beautiful story of **Ruth** (Ru 1:15-18),
- and her grandson **Jesse**, after whom this tree is made (Is 11:1-2).
- The final symbol for the week is that of the greatest Jewish king, **David**, in whose line Jesus was to be born (2 Sam 5:1-5).

THE THIRD WEEK

- The Jesse Tree symbols for the third week of Advent start with the wise **King Solomon** (1 Kgs 3:3-14).
- He is followed by two great prophets, **Elijah** who was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kgs 2:11-18),
- and **Isaiah** who foretold the birth of Jesus (Is 2:4; 7:14; 9:6-7).
- God again reveals his loving concern for us in the stories of **Daniel** (Dan 6:10-23) who was spared death in the lions' den,
- and **Jonah** who survived three days in the belly of a whale (Jon 1-4).
- As we approach the time of Jesus, we learn the story of **Zechariah and Elizabeth** (Lk 1:5-23),
- the parents of **John the Baptist** (Mt 3:1-11). John was the prophet who preached the coming of the Messiah and baptized Jesus.

THE FOURTH WEEK

- The symbols of the fourth week of Advent deal with the people involved with the miraculous birth of Jesus.
- We start with the parents of Mary, **Anne and Joachim**,
- who brought **Mary** up in the readiness to always do God's will (Lk 1:26-38). This prepared her to accept God's invitation to become the mother of his Son.
- **Joseph** (Mt 1:18-25) lovingly fulfilled his role as the husband of Mary and the protective foster father of Jesus.
- The little town of **Bethlehem**, with its mysterious star, was the setting for Jesus' birth.
- The **shepherds** in the fields were the first to hear the news
- proclaimed by the **angels** who filled the sky.
- And so it was that **Jesus** came to be born, closing the final chapter of the saga that had begun so long ago.

Yet his birth is also the beginning of a new and even more wondrous story for all people!