

### Homily 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Advent Rejoice! Year C 2021

Stop! Let's pause for a while and look back. We began Advent lighting the first candle on a wreath. Different evergreens can be used to create the wreath. Laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering; pine, holly, and yew, immortality; cedar, strength and healing. The prickly holly leaves remind us of the crown of thorns. The circle of the wreath, with no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. Pinecones, nuts, or seedpods used to decorate the wreath symbolize life and resurrection. The evergreens depict the immortality of our soul and the new, everlasting life promised to us through Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, who entered our world becoming true man and was victorious over sin and death through His own passion, death, and resurrection.

The four outer candles, three purple and one rose, represent the four weeks of Advent. One tradition says that each candle represents 1000 years, making 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the Birth of the Saviour. The purple symbolizes prayer, penance, preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday. The priest wears rose vestments. Gaudete or Rejoicing Sunday celebrates the midpoint of Advent. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.

The light signifies Christ the Light of the world. The white candle in the middle of the wreath is lit on Christmas Eve as Christ is born. The outer candles represent the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

The Advent wreath offers us the best spiritual reflection in preparation for Christmas that words could never come near to helping us prepare for Christmas, uttering not a word.

If this unassuming symbol offers so much, creation offers even more wisdom, insight and spiritual nourishment if we are awake to it. Angels have always been understood to be messengers of God. The wings, white garments and the brightness are all features added to help make them more accessible. The Advent wreath is also God's messenger, God's Angel, and its message is powerful. Fortunately, God's messengers have many other forms. This season is an invitation to become more aware of God's messengers who pass by every day. In failing to see them, the message is missed.

Macrina Wiederkehr OSB: *You live in a world of theophanies. Holiness comes wrapped in the ordinary. There are burning bushes all around you. Every tree is full of angels. Hidden beauty is waiting in every crumb. Life wants to lead you from crumbs to angels, but this can happen only if you are willing to unwrap the ordinary by staying with it long enough to harvest its treasure.*

Fred dies and goes to heaven.

The Angel at the gate said "to enter the heaven, you must answer 3 questions".

A: name 2 days of a week, that starts with letter T.

F: Today and tomorrow

A: OK, I can accept that. How many seconds are there in a year?

F: 12 seconds

A: (shocked) how come?

F: Jan 2nd, Feb 2nd, March 2nd ...

A: In you go!

