

A Day by Day Spiritual Journey Through Advent  
With Deacon Chris

Monday of the First Week of Advent

The Advent Wreath

Its Meaning.

Light a candle and make sure it is safe and don't leave unattended.

The Advent Wreath is usually circular in shape. A circle has no beginning and no end. It can represent eternity but it also reminds us that God has no beginning and no end.

We usually use foliage that is evergreen which indicates continuous life.

Sometimes the Laurel is used and that is a sign of victory over persecution. A sign of that persecution is the Holly which represents the Crown of Thorn which our Saviour wore. Like the Cross it was meant as mockery and derision but they, too, represent victory.

The four candles tell us that there are four Sundays in Advent. The first Sunday is about Hope, the second is Preparation, the third (pink) Joy and the fourth is Love. The white candle represents Christ. This is a reflection of the Pascal Candle that we bless and light at the Easter Vigil.



### **Blessing of the Wreath**

Father we ask you to bless this wreath which symbolises all that you give us and what you desire in return. Bless all who gaze on it as they try to live out the commandment to love you and their neighbour. Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

### **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

We come before, Lord of the universe, seeking your healing touch. We know that there are times when we fail to live up to the promises that were made on behalf at our baptism. These promises were reaffirmed by ourselves when we were confirmed. We ask you to help all who are sick in mind and body and soul through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

### **Gospel:**

Matthew chapter 8 verses 5 to 11

The cure of the centurion's servant.

### **Reflection**

We repeat the words of the centurion at Mass when the priest lifts up the Holy Eucharist just before we receive it.

The centurion is, I think it is safe to say, a Roman. By definition, an enemy of the Jewish people because they are an occupying force. Despite this, the centurion recognises something very deep in our Lord. The centurion is brave enough to approach Jesus and ask him to cure his servant. I believe he is showing compassion because it would have been easy to get a replacement servant. Our Lord is willing to go with him to carry out what he has been asked. He is overstepping a boundary so that he can fulfil his mission. But the centurion resists this move not out of fear of social reprisals but in the faith and trust that Jesus just has to say the word. Our Lord's response is one of amazement. Here is a gentile who recognises all that Jesus stands for and is not afraid to proclaim it. Our Lord tells the assembly that there is a place in heaven for all peoples and it does not matter where they come from.

This extract also reminds us of Matthew tells us of our Lord's crucifixion and the words the centurion spoke. Was it the same man? I have no answer to that.

### **Your Own Time.**

**Rosary:** Let us pray for all non-Christians who recognise all that God means to us that they don't feel cut off and indeed that we do all that we can to demonstrate that they are our brothers and sisters.

**Concluding Prayer** Because everybody is made in your image and likeness, may your grace, help us to love the whole world in the same way that you showed us. We also ask that St. Andrew prays for us as we journey through Advent. Through Christ our Lord. Amen