

Reflection for the Week: December 20-27th, 2020

Lighting the Fourth Candle on the Advent Wreath

The **fourth candle is lit to recall Mary**. An angel visited Mary, the mother of Jesus, to tell her that God had chosen her out of all the women in the world to be a special servant. She would be with child through the Holy Spirit and bring Jesus into the world. Mary was afraid and excited. Before Jesus was born, Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth to share her happy news. It was a special meeting because Elizabeth, who thought she could not have children and supposed she was too old, was also going to have a baby. When Mary walked into the room, Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy. It was the first meeting between John the Baptist and Jesus. It was a time of great rejoicing, which is why we call this **Gaudete Sunday, 'Gaudete' being the Latin word for rejoice!**

Lighting the fourth candle on the wreath we are also reminded that God is able to bring things about that we never thought possible.

On Christmas Day the central white candle is lit. When he grew up, Jesus said: 'I am the Light of the World.'

Perhaps we can remember the story of Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem, tired and needing somewhere to stay. Although the inn was full the innkeeper did not turn them away, but found room for them in a stable. Lighting this candle reminds us that we can choose to help and welcome the stranger, and also that we can choose to make room for Jesus in our lives.

On Christmas Day many of us will receive gifts. God's greatest gift to us is Jesus. Year after year during Advent we tell the story of this gift coming to earth to share our humanity. But what we tell is more than a story; it is a set of clues about where God is to be found in the world. God is there in the manger, in the ordinary, in the places where people are left out, in quiet corners. And in a sense, we are all part of this story as God continues to love us just where we are; in our fear, our excitement, our lost-ness and sadness, and in our joy. God came to the manger but still enters into our lives today.

To reflect: *God is able to bring things about that we never thought possible. What are the things you pray for/ have prayed for that fall into this category?*

What brings you a profound sense of joy?