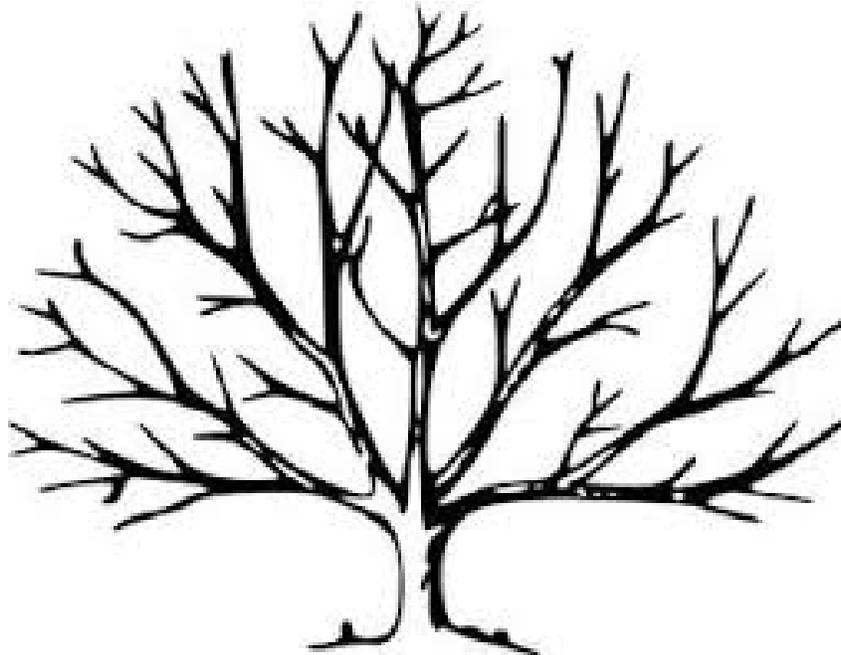


# *The Jesse Tree*



**Saint Michael the Archangel  
Catholic Church  
Lake Jackson, Texas  
December 2017**

## Background



### CONTEMPLATING GOD'S FAMILY

We develop our sense of identity, purpose, security and belonging largely from our families. Children learn about love from being loved, and for most of us that love comes from our families.

It's no different in our faith family. Just as we each have a family tree, a history of our ancestors linked by marriage and blood, so also does Jesus. In the Advent tradition of the Jesse

tree we trace Jesus' family history and learn about the love of God for us as revealed through real-life ancestors of Jesus.

### WHAT IS THE JESSE TREE?

A Jesse Tree is either a real tree or a representation of one, decorated with symbols which mark the journey from the birth of man to the birth of Christ. The symbols represent the ancestral characters and major events depicted in the Jewish scriptures and the gospels. The prophet Isaiah said of the Messiah that, "*a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots*". (Isaiah 11:1)

The **Tree** is a common symbol throughout scripture, most memorably featured in the fall of Adam and Eve. Jesus used images of trees, vines and branches to explain the power and life of God.

**Jesse** was the father of King David.

Thus, in its most original form the Jesse tree illustrates Jesus' human lineage, from Adam and Eve down to Mary. It shows the fulfillment of God's promise of a miracle to the childless Abraham and Sarah, that although both of them were nearing 100 years old, "*kings of peoples shall come from her*".

### JESSE TREE ORIGINS

The depiction of Jesus' ancestry as a tree or vine based on Isaiah 11:1 goes back to the Middle Ages. There is a famous example in a stained-glass window at Chartres Cathedral in northern France, where the tree arises from the side of the sleeping Jesse.

Today we are most likely to see the modern adaptation in our Jesse tree in homes, parishes and schools. It is usually not strictly

limited to Jesus' royal ancestry, but is a means to tell the story of God's faithfulness over the thousands of years of human history up to the quintessential moment of God's grace and mercy – the birth of Jesus.

When we contemplate The Jesse Tree we realize ever more deeply the intimate relationship between God and our own humanity. It helps us to connect with the humanity of Jesus, who, like us, came from a family line that was in many ways imperfect.

#### WHY HAVE A JESSE TREE?

A Jesse tree is especially useful for helping us enter into the spirit of Advent, a spirit of expectant, joyful longing for the God who loves and saves us. It is an engaging way to impart knowledge of our salvation history and the momentous place of Jesus' birth within it.

Thus, while the Jesse Tree is about the journey of the people of God, it also sheds light on our own life journey. It connects us more deeply to scripture, through which Christ never fails to reveal himself to us here and now.

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## Church Jesse Tree Plans for 2017

In Advent 2017, we will present our Jesse Tree symbols on the evergreen trees that make up part of the Nativity setting. In Advent, the stable area will not have any statue figures, but will anticipate the arrival of the Holy Family, stable animals, an angel, shepherds, and wise men, when we reach the evening of Christmas Eve. During Advent, the trees will be the bearers of the Jesse Tree symbols, representing the ancestors of Christ and significant events on the journey to Jesus' birth.

Also, Jesse tree symbols will be incorporated into the environment in the nave of the church. On the hangings on each of the interior columns will be a symbol of the Jesse Tree with symbols. The hangings outside of each of the outer doors of the church will display a collage of the Jesse Tree symbols.

## Where to Obtain Jesse Tree Symbols and Stories

Jesse Tree symbols may be purchase or hand-made. They can either hang from branches or sticks, or can be attached to the surface of poster or fabric hanging on a wall. There are many styles and sizes for purchase (see the internet) and there are also many craft approaches for making your own Jesse Tree symbols. Again, use your favorite online search engines (ex. Google) to find a plethora of ideas for craftwork

This year, the Knights of Columbus will be selling the Jesse Tree resource, "The Jesse Tree: Stories and Symbols of Advent", published by Augsburg Fortress, at their table in the hallway of the Family Life Center after all Masses from Nov. 16 through Dec. 24.

If the supply runs out or you need to order direction, you can contact Augsburg Fortress at phone: 1-800-328-4648, or on the web at: <http://bit.ly/2AVh1Dj>

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## Approaches To Display Jesse Tree Symbols

The following items may be used to display and support the symbols of your Jesse Tree:

- Live Tree - a live evergreen tree ranging in size from miniature (12-24" in height) to a medium to large bare Christmas tree
- Artificial Tree - an artificial Christmas tree of any size
- Dead Tree or Branch - a dead tree or branch, barren of leaves, and held upright by being anchored in a pot of soil or gravel
- Mobile - a wooden or metal mobile hung from the ceiling or other high attachment place
- Poster or Fabric Hanging - poster board or fabric (ex. felt) that hangs on a wall to support Jesse Tree ornaments

## List of Jesse Tree Symbols and Order of Overview

Below is a list of Jesse Tree Symbols and a suggested order to add them to your tree. This order is loosely based on the historical sequence of the events and persons of the Old Testament.

### FIRST WEEK

The Birth of Life  
Adam and Eve  
Noah and the Flood  
Father Abraham  
Isaac and the Ram  
Jacob and his Dream  
The Symbol of Prophecy

### SECOND WEEK

Joseph and his Coat  
Moses and the Law  
The Blessing of Aaron  
Samuel and the Word of the Lord  
David  
Symbol of Shepherds  
The Wisdom of Solomon

### THIRD WEEK

Elijah and the Raven  
Elisha and Healing  
Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Nehemiah the Builder  
Angels  
Zechariah and Elizabeth

### FOURTH WEEK

Virgin Mary  
Magnificat  
Birth of John the Baptizer  
Joseph of Nazareth  
Symbol of Bethlehm  
The Nativity  
Christ Our Lord

## The Birth of Life



### THE SYMBOL

Shown in this symbol is the region called Mesopotamia. Historians believe it is the location where human life began, the BIRTHPLACE of the human race.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 1: 24-28*

"Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds." And so it happened: God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was. Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

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## Adam and Eve



### THE SYMBOL

The first humans, ADAM AND EVE, were created in the image and likeness of God, but they disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit of the garden. They are symbolized by the apple and snake.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 3: 1-6*

"Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made. The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! <sup>1</sup>No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad." The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

## Noah and the Flood



### THE SYMBOL

When humankind had distanced themselves from God. God decided he would bring a FLOOD to the world which would wash away the creatures he had made. He directed NOAH to build an ark, to save his family and pairs of all living creatures.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 6: 11-13, 17-18*

"In the eyes of God the earth was corrupt and full of lawlessness. When God saw how corrupt the earth had become, since all mortals led depraved lives on earth, he said to Noah: "I have decided to put an end to all mortals on earth; the earth is full of lawlessness because of them. So I will destroy them and all life on earth. I, on my part, am about to bring the flood (waters) on the earth, to destroy everywhere all creatures in which there is the breath of life; everything on earth shall perish. But with you I will establish my covenant; you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives, shall go into the ark. Of all other living creatures you shall bring two into the ark, one male and one female, that you may keep them alive with you."

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## Father Abraham



### THE SYMBOL

ABRAHAM was called by God to leave his home and travel to a new home. The tent symbol reflects the wandering of Abraham. Abraham became the FATHER of a great nation.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 12:1-4a; 13:14b-17*

"The LORD said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>1</sup> I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you." Abram went as the LORD directed him. The LORD said to Abram: "Look about you, and from where you are, gaze to the north and south, east and west; all the land that you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth; if anyone could count the dust of the earth, your descendants too might be counted. Set forth and walk about in the land, through its length and breadth, for to you I will give it."

## Isaac and the Ram



### THE SYMBOL

The symbol of the RAM depicts the sacrifice that Abraham offered to God instead of having to sacrifice his only son, ISAAC.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 22:1-2,9-13*

"Then God said: "Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you." When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he tied up his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar. Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the LORD'S messenger called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. "Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger. "Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son." As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son."

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## Jacob and His Dream



### THE SYMBOL

The symbol of the ladder was derived from the Dream of Jacob. It depicts a mystical connection between the earth and heaven.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 3: 1-6*

"Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran. When he came upon a certain shrine, as the sun had already set, he stopped there for the night. Taking one of the stones at the shrine, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep at that spot. Then he had a dream: a stairway rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God's messengers were going up and down on it. And there was the LORD standing beside him and saying: "I, the LORD, am the God of your forefather Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. These shall be as plentiful as the dust of the earth, and through them you shall spread out east and west, north and south. In you and your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing."

## Symbol of Prophecy



### THE SYMBOL

This SYMBOL shows two important aspects of PROPHECY. Light was known to be a symbol of God's intervention. The rose was to blossom in the desert with the coming of Christ, as prophesized by Isaiah..

### SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 9:1-6*

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, As they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, And the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian. For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for flames. For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, From David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!"

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## Joseph and His Coat



### THE SYMBOL

In biblical times, a special coat was often gifted to a person's son, designating him as the principle heir to his father's position. The special COAT given to JOSEPH by his father, Jacob, was an outward sign that Joseph was to be his choice as successor.

### SCRIPTURE *Genesis 37:3-4,26-28,36*

"Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him a long tunic. When his brothers saw that their father loved him best of all his sons, they hated him so much that they would not even greet him. Judah said to his brothers: "What is to be gained by killing our brother and concealing his blood? Rather, let us sell him to these Ishmaelites, instead of doing away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh." His brothers agreed. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. Some Midianite traders passed by, and they pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and took him to Egypt. The Midianites, meanwhile, sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh and his chief steward. "

## Moses and the Law



### THE SYMBOL

God sent Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into freedom. Early in their forty years of wandering in the desert, God gave them the LAW, the Ten Commandments, to seal his covenant with them.

### SCRIPTURE *Exodus 20:1-17*

"Then God delivered all these commandments:

1. I, the LORD, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife"

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## The Blessing of Aaron



### THE SYMBOL

AARON, the brother of Moses, was the high priest of the Israelites as they wandered in the desert for forty years before crossing over the Jordan to enter the Promised Land. In helping form the Jewish religion, among the practices Aaron developed was the sacred BLESSING he would bestow on the people.

### SCRIPTURE *Numbers 6:22-27*

"The LORD said to Moses:

Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them:

This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them:

The LORD bless you and keep you!

The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!

The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!

So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them."

## Samuel and the Word of the Lord



### THE SYMBOL

Considered Israel's first prophet, SAMUEL responded to the WORD OF THE LORD, calling him to serve God. The symbol of the lamp reflects that God's call to Samuel was during the night while sleeping.

### SCRIPTURE 1 Samuel 3:3b-5a, 6, 7-10

"Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am." He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But he answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep." The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

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## David



### THE SYMBOL

DAVID is credited with composing the Palms, which guided the people's prayer for over 3000 years. These songs were often sung with a lyre.

### SCRIPTURE 1 Samuel 16:14, 17-19, 21-23

"The spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and he was tormented by an evil spirit sent by the LORD. Saul then told his servants, "Find me a skillful harpist and bring him to me." A servant spoke up to say: "I have observed that one of the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem is a skillful harpist. He is also a stalwart soldier, besides being an able speaker, and handsome. Moreover, the LORD is with him." Accordingly, Saul dispatched messengers to ask Jesse to send him his son David, who was with the flock. Thus David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul became very fond of him, made him his armor-bearer, and sent Jesse the message, "Allow David to remain in my service, for he meets with my approval." Whenever the spirit from God seized Saul, David would take the harp and play, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, for the evil spirit would leave him. "

## Symbol of Shepherds



### THE SYMBOL

The crook and staff is the most well-known SYMBOL of SHEPHERDS. They are the tools of the shepherd's craft, keeping his flock safe and protected from harm.

### SCRIPTURE *Psalm 23*

"The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley, I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and staff that give me courage.

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come."

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## Wisdom of Solomon



### THE SYMBOL

The crown was a symbol for King SOLOMON. God granted him with a wisdom unlike any known before or since.

### SCRIPTURE *1 Kings 3: 5,7,9-12*

"In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask something of me and I will give it to you." Solomon answered: "O LORD, my God, you have made me, your servant, king to succeed my father David; but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act. Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?" The LORD was pleased that Solomon made this request. So God said to him: "Because you have asked for this --not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but for understanding so that you may know what is right-- I do as you requested. I give you a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you up to now, and after you there will come no one to equal you."

## Elijah and the Raven



### THE SYMBOL

ELIJAH was known to Israel as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. God commanded RAVENS to provide food for Elijah to sustain him in times of famine.

### SCRIPTURE *1 Kings 17: 10b-15*

"As he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread." "As the LORD, your God, lives," she answered, "I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." "Do not be afraid," Elijah said to her. "Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" She left and did as Elijah had said. She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well; !"

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## Elisha and Healing



### THE SYMBOL

Elisha became known as a prophet with great HEALING powers, even curing Naaman, a military leader, of leprosy. His symbol depicts Elisha's healing touch.

### SCRIPTURE *2 Kings 5:1-27*

"When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his garments, he sent word to the king: "Why have you torn your garments? Let him come to me and find out that there is a prophet in Israel." Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. The prophet sent him the message: "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean." But Naaman went away angry, saying, "I thought that he would surely come out and stand there to invoke the LORD his God, and would move his hand over the spot, and thus cure the leprosy. Since he said to you, 'Wash and be clean,' should you do as he said." So Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

# Isaiah



## THE SYMBOL

The prophet ISAIAH (whose name means “salvation of Yahweh”) was the first of the four major prophets along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Daniel in the Old Testament, living about 700 years before the birth of Jesus. His prophecies about the coming of the Messiah are often read in the season of Advent.

## SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 6:1-8*

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!" they cried one to the other. "All the earth is filled with his glory!" At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, "Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it. "See," he said, "now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" "Here I am," I said; "send me!"

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# Jeremiah



## THE SYMBOL

The prophet JEREMIAH repeatedly warned the Jews to cease their ungodly and idolatrous ways. Failing that, they were allowed to be conquered and led off in exile. The symbol depicts the covenant they broke with God.

## SCRIPTURE *Jeremiah 31: 31-34*

"The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more."

## Nehemiah the Builder



### THE SYMBOL

NEHEMIAH THE BUILDER excelled in the practical matter of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and the spiritual matter of rebuilding the religion of his people.

### SCRIPTURE *Nehemiah 13: 17a, 18, 19b, 20-22*

"I took the nobles of Judah to task, demanding of them:

"Did not your fathers act in this same way, with the result that our God has brought all this evil upon us and upon this city? Would you add to the wrath against Israel by once more profaning the sabbath?" I ordered the doors to be closed and forbade them to be reopened till after the sabbath. I posted some of my own men at the gates so that no burden might enter on the sabbath day. The merchants and sellers of various kinds of merchandise spent the night once or twice outside Jerusalem, but then I warned them, saying to them: "Why do you spend the night alongside the wall? If you keep this up, I will lay hands on you!" Then I ordered the Levites to purify themselves and to go and watch the gates, so that the sabbath day might be kept holy. This, too, remember in my favor, O my God, and have mercy on me in accordance with your great mercy!"

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## Angels



### THE SYMBOL

ANGELS are messengers of God, usually messengers of good news. Many important messages from God were conveyed to persons in scripture. They show us one of the ways that God communicates with us.

### SCRIPTURE *Hebrews 1: 1-6*

"In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: "You are my son; this day I have begotten you"? Or again: "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me"? And again, when he leads the first-born into the world, he says: "Let all the angels of God worship him."

## Zechariah and Elizabeth



### THE SYMBOL

ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH were the parents of John the Baptizer. Zechariah was a sincere and conscientious priest in Judaism, whose symbol is the altar.

### SCRIPTURE *Luke 1: 5-8, 9b, 11-13*

"In the days of Herod, King of Judea,<sup>3</sup> there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. The angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid,<sup>5</sup> Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John.

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## Virgin Mary



### THE SYMBOL

The VIRGIN MARY was the very young Jewish girl chosen by God to bear his son. Her "yes" cooperated with God's plan to send a Messiah to save humankind. Both lilies and roses are symbols of the Virgin Mary.

### SCRIPTURE *Luke 1: 26b-28, 30b-32a, 34-35, 38*

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her."

## Magnificat



### THE SYMBOL

After agreeing to bear God's son and traveling to visit her cousin Elizabeth, Mary proclaimed her beautiful song-prayer known as the MAGNIFICAT. The symbol depicts Mary singing praise to do for his saving of his people through the upcoming birth of his son.

### SCRIPTURE *Luke 1:46:55*

"And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home."

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## Birth of John the Baptizer



### THE SYMBOL

In spite of Zechariah and Elizabeth being quite elderly, their only son, John, who would become JOHN THE BAPTIZER was BORN to them. Jesus later said that John was greater than any man born of woman.

### SCRIPTURE *Luke 1: 57-64, 67-68*

"When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John." But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God. Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people."

## Joseph of Nazareth



### THE SYMBOL

JOSEPH OF NAZARETH found himself in the predicament of being betrothed to Mary, pregnant out of wedlock. Justly, Joseph agreed to take Mary as his wife, saving her (and the Baby Jesus) from probable death.

### SCRIPTURE *Matthew 1: 18-19, 20b-21, 24-25*

"Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus."

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## Symbol of Bethlehem



### THE SYMBOL

This SYMBOL depicts the star that shone over BETHLEHEM on the night of Jesus' birth guided the Magi to find Jesus, acknowledging as a king and offering gifts.

### SCRIPTURE *Matthew 2:1-12*

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, <sup>2</sup> behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea. Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was."

## Birth of Jesus



### THE SYMBOL

The BIRTH OF JESUS was the culmination of the long journey, fulfilling God's promise to send his son as Messiah to earth for the salvation of humankind. This symbol shows Mary laying her newborn babe in a manger.

### SCRIPTURE *Luke 2: 6-13a*

"While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God."

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## Christ Our Lord



### THE SYMBOL

A common symbol of CHRIST OUR LORD is the pair of Greek letters, the Chi and the Rho, which formed the first two letters of the word "Christos" or "Christ".

### SCRIPTURE *John 1: 1-5, 14-18*

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him."

