

Promise of Jesus

This Advent program and Resources Guide has been prepared by the Centre for Liturgy of the Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia, to cover the four Sundays of Advent 2012. This Resource Guide will be useful for Parish Priests and Liturgists as well as for parish groups for setting the right atmosphere and environment for liturgies and group prayer. The program is designed for use in small groups of up to 12 people as well as in families and by the individual who wishes to use it for personal reflection.

Parts of the program may be used for Mass commentaries and for inclusion in parish bulletins and newsletters.

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Blessings on all who use this program!



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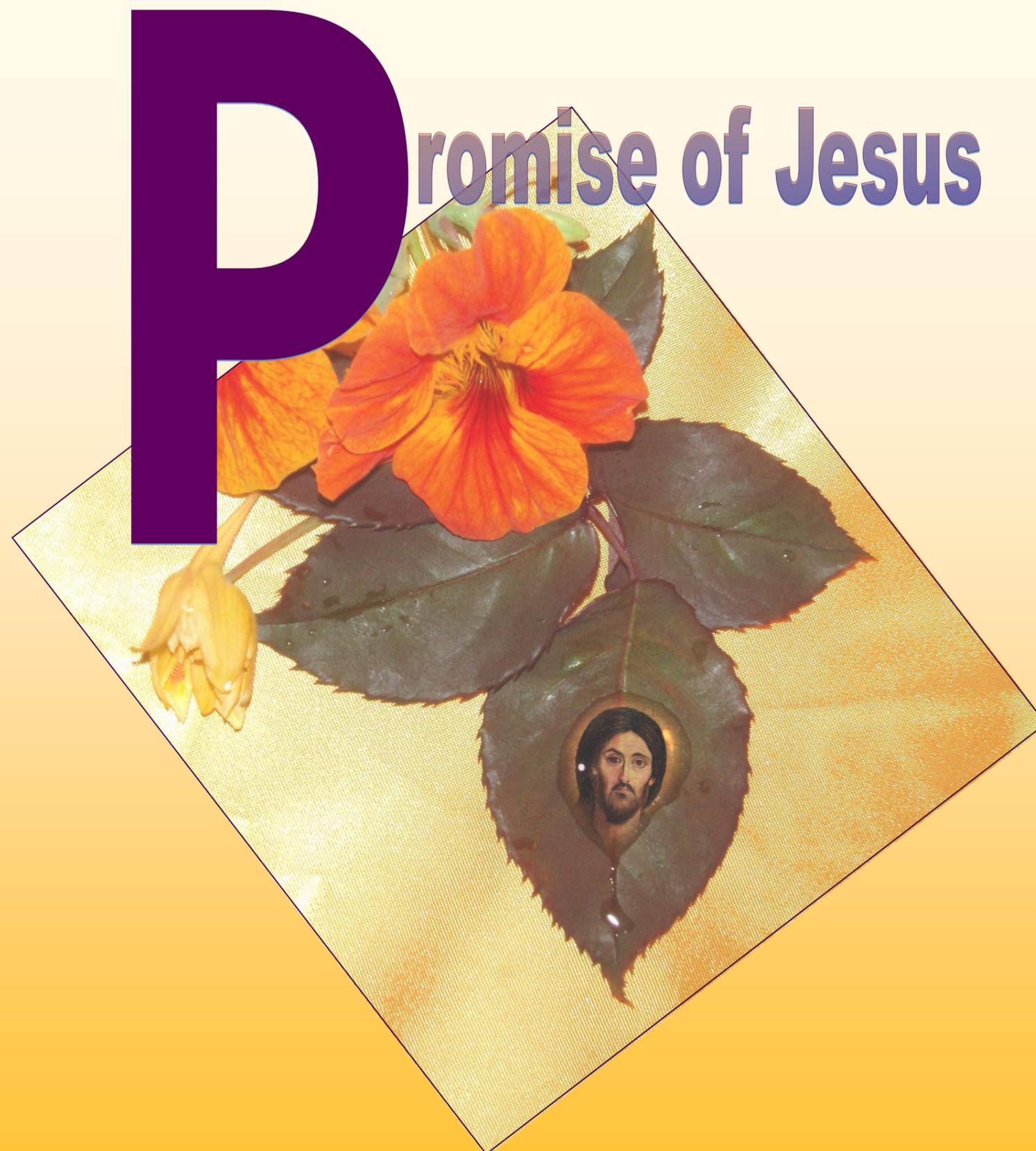
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Parish Advent Program 2012 - Year C

Centre for Liturgy, Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia

Promise of Jesus - Advent 2012

Philip Yancy in his book 'What's so Amazing about Grace', tells us that "Grace is indeed amazing, it contains the essence of the Gospel as a drop of water can contain the image of the sun."

The world hungers for grace. We need only look at the behaviour heralded in the headlines of the press and shown on TV to know that everything is not gracious. Grace is the personal acceptance we each need to develop the love required to live out a fulfilled and joyful life. It is when we truly understand that God is love, unconditional love, that we meet grace. The world cannot offer us grace. The only place each of us can come to an understanding of grace is within the church where we encounter Jesus.

Grace comes to us in three ways, uncreated grace is the gift we receive that is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the just, grace that is created by participating in the life of Christ and grace that strengthens us to do good and avoid evil.

Grace is not gathered up by performing religious duties. It is a gift we cannot earn but at the same time it is not a static possession, we can become more gracious. A gift is of little value if we don't use it. A young man during a religious discussion was asked what he thought about grace. His answer was "Grace is given to us by God and we need to use it so that it develops...muscles...and we can better fight the poorness within ourselves and the world." All around us are moments of grace. We are graced by the beauty of God's world, a sunset, the beauty of a flower, song of a bird even the strength of the gathering storm clouds. The realisation that the universe is made up of a profusion of life and we are part of this creation fills us with awe, joy and exuberance.

Grace is the wholeness that comes from giving and receiving, it is the energy that inspires us to compassion, to encouragement, acceptance and forgiveness.

To serve others is a natural expression of Grace, that is, God's love for us. It is expressed by St Paul when he writes in Corinthians 13 about what love is. "It is kind and patient and never gives up," "Love is eternal." We now enter the Year of Faith, a call from Pope Benedict, which commenced on the 11th October, to a renewal through retracing the history and looking to a deeper knowledge of our faith, becoming more aware of our Creed through prayer and Catechesis and living out what we believe. Within the Years of Grace and Faith that will run concurrently until Pentecost when the Year of Grace finishes, we are called to nurture the gifts of grace and faith in our lives.

The Cover

When we look into the drop of water we see the face of Christ reflected back to us, inviting us to be open to him during our preparation for his coming as man and God. The water of Baptism brings us into a unique and unbreakable relationship to God. We can lose grace as well as faith by our choices but we can never lose the bond of Baptism. The suggested colours for this advent are those used for the year of Grace, red, yellow and orange, plus the traditional colours of the season, violet and rose.



Advent Wreath

Like the Christmas Tree and Nativity scene, there is no liturgical requirement to have an Advent Wreath. The use of the wreath's origins has historical pagan links. The northern hemisphere winter solstice was acknowledged through lit candles being placed in a wreath.

The Christian understanding of Christ as the 'Light of the World' adopted the tradition. Even the shape of the wreath as a circle suggests God's unbroken love for us and all his creation. The word Advent derives from the Latin "Adventus", which means coming: the coming of the baby Jesus, the incarnation 2000 years ago, and his second coming in judgement in the future. The tradition is fairly loose about when the wreath is taken down. In many Parishes, it stays up through the Christmas season.

When using the Advent Wreath, the following is recommended.

- The Advent Wreath does not interfere with the Altar, Lectern or the Presider's chair.
- No prayer or separate liturgy is required for each candle, but if planned, it should be carried out before the opening prayer or at the end of the Liturgy of the Word.
- The Advent Wreath can be constructed from fresh or dried flowers or fabric, but must be large enough to give prominence to the wreath as a secondary element in the liturgy.
- The wreath can have four candles either on the wreath or placed separately from the Wreath.
- The candles reflect the traditional colours of the Advent Season; violet and rose.
- Three of the candles are violet and one is rose (this candle is for the Third Sunday).
- All four candles can be white.
- A fifth white candle can be used to represent Christ at Christmas.

Art
&

Environment

The theme of this year's program is **Promise**.

When we look into the face of Christ we see the promise of all he offers to us. The Advent wreath can be highlighted by using not only the colours of the season; violet and rose but the colours of the Year of Grace, yellow, orange and red.

Ribbons of these colours can encircle the candles or be hung from the base of the wreath or both.

Strip banners (as in the picture) with the words of hope, peace, joy and love can be added, as a theme for each week. Week one is hope, two is peace, three is joy and four is love.