



# Jesse Tree

AN ADVENT DEVOTION  
DECEMBER 1 - 24  
FOR CHILDREN 5-9 YEARS OLD



RETOLD BY  
*Pat Grappolini*



*I am*  
**blessed**

BE THAT LIGHT FOR OTHERS  
DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES

The Jesse Tree story is a love story.  
It's also a family story.

This is the story of God's love for our human family – which is all of us. We are all children of God, and so we are all brothers and sisters together. The people who came before us – long before Jesus was born – are also our family and these are their stories.

The “Jesse Tree” story is about the people who were in Jesse's family. You will meet the real Jesse along the way...



Pat Grappolini

Written by Pat Grappolini  
Edited by Fr. Bill Corcoran



DECEMBER 1

# Creation of the Earth

In the beginning there was only God. God had so much love to give that creation just had to happen. God started with light because up until then, there was nothing except God. God created the sun, moon, and stars – all the light possible. Next came our Earth and other planets around other stars.



Then God wanted to fill up the Earth – with oceans, seas, rivers, lakes – all the water possible. Then God worked on the land part of our Earth – mountains, hills, valleys, and plains – many different spaces. Finally God knew that this part of Creation was finished. Creation was God's first gift of love.

DECEMBER 2

# The Garden

After the Earth with its land and water was completed, God wanted to fill our Earth with plants and animals. Finally, God created humans – a man and a woman, called Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve gave each of the plants and animals a name.



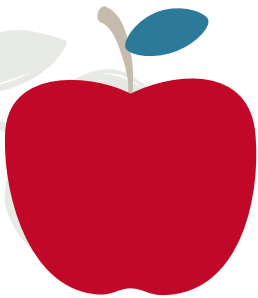
God gave Adam and Eve a wonderful Garden for them to live and to play. They never had to work, and they could visit all day with God. There were lots of plants and trees. In the centre of the Garden were the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. God told Adam and Eve that they could eat fruit from any of the trees, except the Tree of Knowledge. If they ate that fruit, God told them, they would die. God thought, “If Adam and Eve love me, they will do what I have asked them to do. Then we can all stay forever in my wonderful Garden.”

Reference | GENESIS 2:4

DECEMBER 3

# The Apple

One of the creatures in the Garden was very evil. This creature was called Satan. Satan hated God, and wanted to hurt God. Satan pretended to be a snake, and lied to Adam and Eve. Satan told them that they would not die if they ate fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. “If you eat some of that fruit”, hissed Satan, “You will be just like God!” Adam and Eve believed this lie.



They ate some of the fruit, and then they knew that it was a wrong thing to do. They were ashamed and they hid themselves. God came looking for them. God knew that they had not listened to what they were told, and was so sad.

God found Adam and Eve, and told them that they could not live in the Garden anymore. “I still love you so much, but now you will have to leave the Garden, and work hard for the rest of your lives.” God hoped they would be sorry and that they could still love each other. God promised them, “Someday, I will send a special person to help people find their way back to loving Me.”

DECEMBER 4

# The Rainbow

Adam and Eve had children and grandchildren. Soon there were many people living on the earth. Some of those people were wicked and forgot about God. God was sad, but found one family that still remembered and loved God. This was Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives. God spoke to Noah and told him that it was going to start to rain – for a very long time. God planned to flood the entire Earth, and drown all of the wicked people.



God told Noah to build an ark – a very big boat that he could live on with his family and the animals that God wanted to save. Noah built the ark, filled it with two of each kind of animal and all of his own family. Then it started to rain. It rained for forty days and nights, and the entire Earth was flooded. All the wicked people drowned and died. When the rain stopped and the flood waters dried up, Noah came out of the ark with his family and all of the animals.

God promised Noah that the Earth would never be flooded again. God loved all of us too much to ever punish us like that again. God placed a rainbow in the sky, to remind everyone of this promise. Maybe you've seen one too?

**Reference |** GENESIS 6:9 – 9:17

DECEMBER 5

# The Stars

Many years passed. Once again there were many people. One of them was called Abram. He and his wife Sarah loved God and God loved them. When God asked them to travel far away from their home, they did what God asked.



God helped Abram and his wife. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and promised him that even though he and Sarah had no children yet, eventually they would have a very large family. There would be so many that no one could count them – like the stars in the sky. God promised Abraham that one of his great grandchildren would be that special person that Adam and Eve had been promised. This person would come to help people learn how to love God again.

DECEMBER 6

# The Tent

Abraham and his wife Sarah lived in the desert, where everyone lived in tents. They were shepherds, following their sheep and goats to new pastures, whenever they needed to. Their tents were open at the bottom, to let air move easily, since it was often very hot.



Tents were woven from black goat hair that they cut from their flocks. There were different rooms in each tent – one for the women in the family, one for the servants, and one for the men.

One day three visitors came to Abraham in his tent. Abraham brought food for them to eat, because travelling in the desert was dangerous and lonely. The visitors told Abraham that his wife Sarah would have a baby boy in the next year. Sarah was in another part of the same tent, so she heard what they said, and she laughed. She and Abraham were very old by then, and she didn't think a baby was possible for them anymore. Sarah and Abraham didn't know it, but their visitors were really God and two angels. When the same visitors came back a year later, Sarah had a baby boy. She called him Isaac, because that was how you said the word "laughter" in their language. Abraham and Sarah loved Isaac very much – but they loved God even more, because God had given Isaac to them.

**Reference |** GENESIS 18:1-6

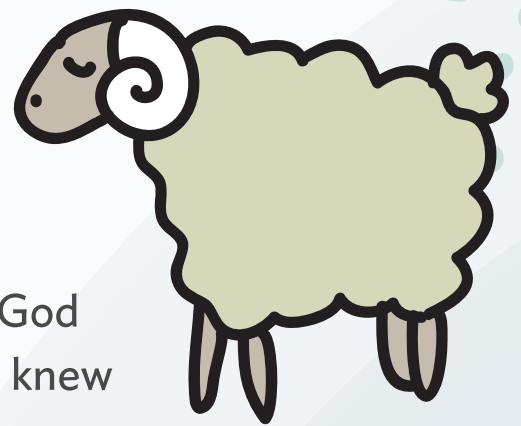
DECEMBER 7

# Ram

When Isaac was still a young boy, God called Abraham and told him to kill Isaac and offer him to God as a sacrifice. Abraham loved Isaac, but he also loved and trusted God. He didn't know what God's plan was, but he hoped everything would be fine in the end.

Abraham took Isaac up a mountain. Isaac asked, "Father, we have everything we will need for the sacrifice, except the sheep." Abraham replied, "Don't worry my son, God will provide everything we will need." Abraham tied up Isaac and placed him onto a rock. He was about to kill Isaac, but just in time, God called Abraham and said, "Do not hurt your son.

Because you were ready to kill Isaac, your only son whom you love, now I know that you really do love Me." Abraham found a ram tangled up by its horns in a bush close by. He and Isaac caught the ram, killed it, and offered it to God instead of Isaac. Both Abraham and Isaac knew now that God really did love them.





DECEMBER 8

# Ladder



When Isaac grew up, he married Rebecca and they had twin boys, Esau and Jacob. When the brothers were grown, Isaac sent Jacob to a faraway country to find a wife.

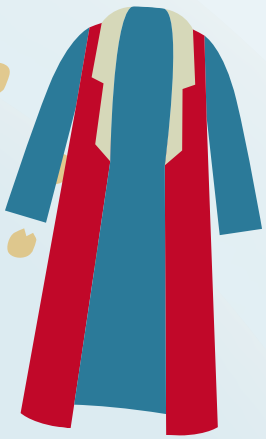
One night on the way, Jacob dreamt a very strange dream. In the dream, there was a ladder reaching up from earth to heaven. Angels were climbing up and down the ladder. God spoke to Jacob in the dream, and said, “I am the God of your grandfather Abraham and your father Isaac. All of this land here will be yours. You will have many children, and I will look after your family forever.”

And so Jacob knew that God loved him, just as God had loved his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. He marked the spot where he had fallen asleep with a large rock. Jacob decided that he would come back to that place after he had found a wife. This spot is very close to the town of Bethlehem, that we will talk about later. But I think you already know something about Bethlehem!



DECEMBER 9

# Coat of many Colours



Our friend Jacob had twelve sons! The second youngest was called Joseph. Jacob loved him the most, and gave him a special coat with many different colours. Like his father Jacob, Joseph also had strange dreams. In one dream, his brothers told him that he could be their boss.

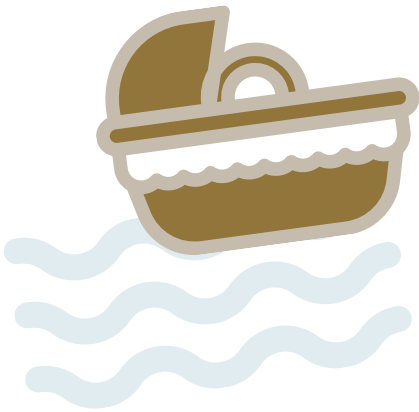
Joseph's brothers were jealous and they decided to kill Joseph. The youngest brother, Benjamin, loved Joseph

He told his brothers that they should not kill Joseph, but sell him to traders along the road. So that is what they did. They took away Joseph's beautiful coat and spilled animal blood on it. Then they told their father Jacob that a wild animal had killed Joseph. Jacob was so very sad that his son Joseph was dead, and thought he would never see him again. But God had such a wonderful plan!

Joseph went with the traders to Egypt. The king (called a Pharaoh) learned about Joseph's strange dreams and his gift of understanding dreams. He treated Joseph like his own son and soon Joseph was very powerful. One day Joseph's brothers came to Egypt. Joseph forgave them for sending him away from home. Jacob's entire family came to live in Egypt with Joseph. God changed Jacob's name to "Israel" and so his family would be called the "Israelites".

DECEMBER 10

# Baby's Basket



Jacob's family (the Israelites) grew and grew in Egypt, just as God had promised Abraham many years before. Soon the Egyptians were frightened because there were so many Israelites. The Pharaoh decided that it would be a good idea to kill all the baby boys in the Israelite camp.

One Israelite mother hid her baby boy in a basket and floated him onto the river. The Pharaoh's daughter found the basket and kept the baby as her own son. She called him "Moses" because that meant "I drew him from the water".

Moses grew up as a Prince in the Pharaoh's house. One day Moses discovered that he was actually an Israelite. Later he killed an Egyptian soldier in a fight. This made Pharaoh very angry and he wanted to kill Moses. Instead, Moses ran away into the desert to escape Pharaoh. Moses found a family of shepherds there, and began to live in the desert. He had to learn what it meant to be an Israelite and not an Egyptian, but God helped him.

**Reference** | EXODUS 1:1-22 & 2:1-17

DECEMBER 11

# Burning Bush

The Egyptians treated the Israelites very badly. The Israelites prayed that God would rescue them, and God heard them. One day while Moses was taking care of his sheep, he saw something strange - there was a fire in a bush, but it didn't burn up. He went close to the bush, and God called to him from the bush: "Moses - I have heard my people, the Israelites, praying to me to rescue them. Go to Pharaoh and tell him - Let my people go!" Moses did not want to, but he obeyed, because he had learned to love God.



At first, Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites leave. God sent ten terrible disasters to the Egyptians. The last of God's punishments was to kill the first born baby of all of the Egyptians, even of their animals. After that, the Pharaoh ordered Moses and all of the Israelites to leave. Almost immediately, he changed his mind, and sent his soldiers after them. The Israelites came to a large sea. God sent a strong wind to blow a path through the sea. The Israelites walked right across on dry land. When the Egyptians tried to follow them, God stopped the wind. The sea swallowed up all of the Egyptian soldiers. And so Moses and all of the Israelites left Egypt safely. They began to wander in the desert, looking for the land that God had promised Jacob so many years before.

Reference | [EXODUS 3-15](#)

DECEMBER 12

# Manna

God's family wandered for many years in the desert near Egypt. They were returning to their own land, where Jacob had his dream. On the way, the people complained to Moses that they were thirsty. God told Moses to hit a rock with his shepherd's staff. When he did that, water came out of the rock for all of the people to drink. It was so good!

But the people were still very hungry. The food they brought from Egypt was gone. There was not much to eat in the desert. One morning, God sent them a special gift. Something that looked like snow began to fall all over the land. They ate it, and it tasted very good. They called it "manna", because that meant "what is this?" in their language. The Israelites used these little flakes to make bread. And every night after that, God also sent flocks of wild birds into the camp for the Israelites to catch and eat.

This is how God fed the Israelites in the desert for forty years until they found their way back to their own land. Didn't God take such great care of all those Israelites?

DECEMBER 13

# Ten Commandments

Moses and the Israelites wandered a very long time in the desert. Some forgot how much God loved them, and began to be wicked. God called Moses to come up a high mountain and they talked together. God gave Moses rules for the Israelite people to follow. The rules were carved into rock, so that they would last for a very long time. There were ten rules, called Commandments. The first three rules told the people to love God more than anything else. The other seven rules taught them how to love each other. This helped God's people to love God and to be more caring of each other.

Finally after forty years in the desert, the Israelites found their way back to the land God had promised Jacob. They stayed there and grew into a very powerful nation.



Reference | EXODUS 19:1 - 20:20

DECEMBER 14

# Wheat

Naomi was an Israelite woman. She and her husband lived in Bethlehem and they had two sons. The family moved far away and both sons married wives from that land. When Naomi's husband and both sons died, she told her two daughters-in-law that they should go back to their own country. Naomi wanted to go back to Bethlehem.

One left, but the other one, called Ruth, told Naomi, "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." Ruth and Naomi travelled back to Bethlehem. Ruth continued to look after her mother-in-law, because she loved Naomi very much.

There was a famine, which means there was little food for anyone. Ruth and Naomi were poor and hungry too. Ruth got permission to go into the wheat field. She picked up the little bits that had fallen to the ground. This was all the food that she and Naomi had to eat. The owner of the field was a very rich man. He noticed how hard Ruth worked and how well she cared for Naomi. He fell in love with Ruth and married her. Ruth continued to look after her mother-in-law until Naomi died.

[Reference](#) | RUTH



DECEMBER 15

# Oil Lamp

Another Israelite woman called Hannah had no children. She loved God and prayed for a son. Finally her son was born. She called him Samuel. When Samuel was just three years old, Hannah brought Samuel to the priests to say thank you to God and to help the old priest.



No one had heard God's voice for many, many years. In those days, they used oil lamps in the darkness. One night, before the lamp went out, God called, "Samuel!" Samuel woke up and ran to the old priest. "Here I am, for you called me." The priest told Samuel to go back to bed and go to sleep again. Again, God called, "Samuel!" Samuel got up, and ran to the priest again. "Here I am, for you called

me." Once again, the priest told Samuel to go back to bed. When God called Samuel a third time, the priest realized that it was God calling. He told Samuel, "The next time you hear a call, say, 'Speak Lord, I am listening.'" God did come back to Samuel that night, and began speaking with Samuel. From then on, Samuel became a great friend of God, telling the people what God wanted them to hear. That was the way that God chose to talk to people from then on – telling special people, both men and women, who were called "prophets", important messages to share with everyone.



DECEMBER 16

# Shepherd's Staff



Many years passed and now Samuel was an old man. God told him many things, and even to make Saul the King of the Israelites. But God was not happy with King Saul because he had been wicked. God sent Samuel to the town of Bethlehem to see a man called Jesse (YES – that Jesse!) Jesse had eight sons. God told Samuel that one of them was to be the new King of the Israelites.

Jesse brought seven of his sons to meet Samuel. Each time he saw one, Samuel told Jesse, “No, God has not chosen this one.” Finally, Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all of your sons?” “No,” said Jesse, “The youngest one, David, is out looking after the sheep.” “Bring David here,” said Samuel. David came in from the hills, with his shepherd’s staff over his shoulder. When Samuel saw David, God said, “He is the one.”

And so David was named the new King, to take over after King Saul died. No one was allowed to know except Jesse and his family, because King Saul was very jealous.



DECEMBER 17

# Harp

King Saul was unhappy, because he had let God down. He was so sad that only gentle music could make him feel better. He asked, “Who is the best harp player in the land?” His helpers told him, “David, Jesse’s son in Bethlehem plays the harp very well.”



And so David came to stay with King Saul. Remember, no one there knew that God had chosen David to be the next King! David loved to sing and play the harp. We have many of David’s songs that we can read or sing even today. They are in the part of the Bible called “The Psalms”.

King Saul loved David like a son, and took him along with him, even into battle. David had many adventures with King Saul, including killing a giant called Goliath, with his shepherd’s slingshot. King Saul found out that David was really the one whom God wanted to be the next King for the Israelites. He was very angry, and tried to kill David. God always kept David safe so that he could one day be the king.

DECEMBER 18

# Crown

After King Saul died, David became King of the Israelites. He was a great warrior king. David wanted to build a house for God – called a Temple. But God said, “No – not you, but your son will build the Temple. I will build you a house – a great family.” God promised David, “The special person, whom I promised Adam and Eve that I will send, will be one of your descendants – a great grandchild!”



David’s son, Solomon, became the next King. God asked Solomon, “What would you like most for me to give you?” Solomon could have asked for anything. But instead, he

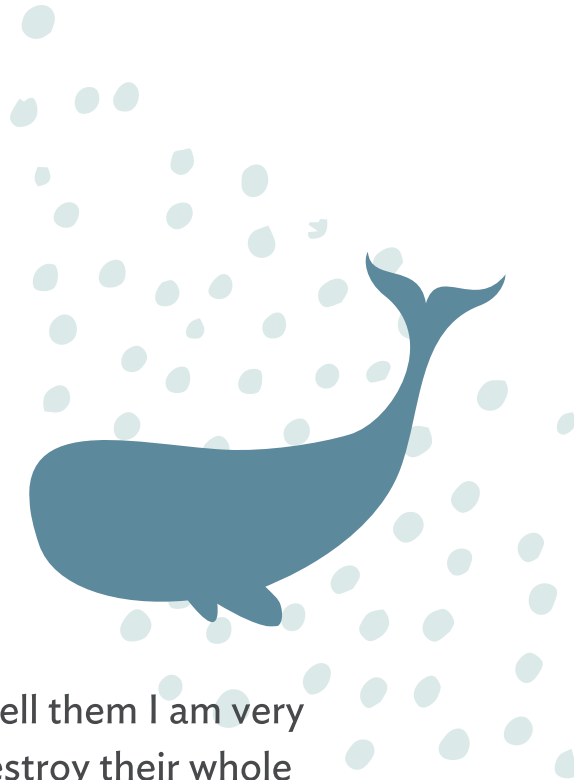
asked God, “Please make me very wise.” God was pleased. “Because you asked me for wisdom, and you did not ask me for a long life or strength or riches or victory in battle, I will give you all of that – wisdom and everything else too.”

Solomon built a Temple for the people to pray to God. God promised Solomon, “If you do everything I ask you to do, and always love me, someone from your family will always be King for my people, just as I promised your father David.” Solomon was King for 40 years. There are many stories of the other Kings in Israel.

**Reference** | 2 SAMUEL 7: 1–16 & KINGS 3:1–16

DECEMBER 19

# Whale



Some of Israel's Kings did not love and obey God. God punished them by sending the people away to faraway lands. God still loved them, and sent prophets to bring them messages. One of these prophets was called Jonah.

God told Jonah, "Go to the city of Nineveh, and tell them I am very angry that they are being wicked. I am going to destroy their whole city!" Jonah was afraid to go to Nineveh so he hid on a ship, sailing far away. God knew where Jonah was, and sent a storm so fierce that the ship was about to fall apart.

Jonah knew that he was the one who had made God angry. He jumped into the sea. The storm stopped right away. A great fish (like a whale) came and swallowed Jonah up. Jonah stayed three days inside the whale. Jonah prayed to God from inside the whale, and said he was sorry for not obeying God.

Jonah promised to go to Nineveh. The whale spit Jonah out onto dry land and Jonah went to Nineveh. He called out in a loud voice, "God is angry. Stop being wicked or He will destroy all of Nineveh!" When the people in Nineveh heard Jonah's message, they were sorry for being wicked. They asked God to forgive them. And God did!

[Reference](#) | JONAH

DECEMBER 20

# Lion

God's people, the Israelites, did not always love and obey God. When they were being very wicked, God let their enemies defeat them in battle. Then the Israelites had to go far away to the land of their enemies.

But God had not forgotten the people, and still loved them very much. God sent the Israelites another messenger called Daniel. Do you remember hearing about Joseph who had strange dreams and knew what other people's dreams meant? Daniel also had many strange dreams. He could also tell other people what their dreams meant too, because God helped him to understand the dreams.

The King of this land loved Daniel because he could help the King understand his dreams. Some wicked people were jealous of Daniel so they told lies about him. The King believed their lies, and threw Daniel into a den with lions. The lions did not hurt Daniel, and in the morning, Daniel told the King, "My God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me. I have done no wrong against you, my King." Then the King was happy. He took Daniel out of the lion's den, and instead threw in the wicked people who had lied about Daniel. The lions ate them up!



Reference | DANIEL 6:1-28

DECEMBER 21

# Angel



Finally, after many years, God brought the Israelite people back home. One of God's friends was called Zachary. He and his wife Elizabeth were very old, and they had no children. God sent the angel Gabriel to talk to Zachary.

The angel told him that Elizabeth was going to have a baby. His name would be John. The angel told Zachary, "John will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord." Zachary did not believe the angel. So the angel told Zachary, "Until John is born, you will not be able to talk."

As soon as the baby was born, Zachary could talk again. He told everyone about the angel who had visited him. Zachary and Elizabeth named their baby John, just as the angel had told them to do. John grew up to be one of God's messengers – the last great prophet. He told the people that God's holy one was coming soon. John was called "John the Baptist", because he baptized people in the river Jordan, pouring water over them. Just as the angel Gabriel had said, John's job was to help God's people get ready for that special person who was coming to help them learn how to love God again. "Get ready!" John told the Israelites, "God has loved you for so long, and now at last God is keeping this promise."

**Reference |** LUKE 1: 39-80

DECEMBER 22

# Lily



Mary was a young girl who loved God very much. She was part of King David's family. God sent the angel Gabriel to visit Mary too. Gabriel told Mary, "The Lord is with you!"

Mary was afraid at first, but the angel told her that she would become the mother of a baby who would be called Jesus. He would be that special person that God had promised Adam and Eve so many years before. The angel told Mary that her very old cousin Elizabeth was also going to have a baby.

Mary agreed to be Jesus' mother, even though she was afraid. Then Mary went to help Elizabeth with the birth of her baby. As soon as Elizabeth saw Mary coming, her baby jumped inside of her. Elizabeth knew that Mary's baby would be someone very special – and her baby John did too! So imagine that – John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins because their mothers were cousins!

## Note

Mary is often associated with the lily because it is white, untouched and noble. The lily was also thought to have the power of healing, and this reminds us that Mary brought Jesus into the world, to save us from our sins.

**Reference |** LUKE 1:26-38



DECEMBER 23

# Hammers

Do you remember meeting Jesse? He was David's father. God's people remembered all of the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren from Jesse. They kept a list for many hundreds of years. Even when God sent them far away into other lands, they still remembered who was in God's special family of kings.

After all those years, there was a man called Joseph, who was one of those great-grand children. Joseph was a carpenter, and he was engaged to Mary. Suddenly, he found out that she was pregnant, before they were married. Joseph was not happy, but he loved Mary and did not want to hurt her.

One night, an angel came to Joseph in a dream. "Joseph," said the angel, "Don't be afraid. Mary's baby comes from God. You should marry her and take care of her and the baby. The baby will be called "Emmanuel" which means "God is with us." When Joseph woke up from his dream, he did exactly what the angel said. He promised to look after Mary and her baby.



DECEMBER 24

# Star of David

There was a Roman governor who ruled over the Israelites. He wanted to count all the people – this is called “taking a census”. Joseph and Mary both came from the family of David. Mary’s baby would be born soon. They had to leave their home and go to Bethlehem, the City of David, to register for this census.

There was no place for them to stay. Mary and Joseph ended up in a stable for the night. While they were there, baby Jesus was born. Shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem saw and followed a bright star in the sky and heard angels singing. They hurried to Bethlehem to meet the new baby. The angels had told them he was the new king. Wise people from faraway lands also came, following that same bright star.

It was all very exciting for the people of Bethlehem. Finally God had kept the promise that was made to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jesse, David and so many others along the way. God loved us so much that Jesus was born as one of us in that stable in Bethlehem.





Is that the end of the story of God's love for us? Of course not! Jesus grew up. He died on a cross, and rose back to new life. Then he promised his friends that God would be sending the Holy Spirit to keep us company forever. This Holy Spirit would comfort and guide us, reminding us how much God loves us. All we have to do is listen.

I have heard the Holy Spirit whispering in my heart. Maybe you have too?

*Pat Grappolini*



Pat Grappolini's Jesse Tree artwork



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*The people who walked  
in darkness have seen  
a great light...*

ISAIAH 9:2



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# I am blessed

BE THAT LIGHT FOR OTHERS  
DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES



## Pray

Remember others  
in your prayers.



## Act

Do good deeds  
for others.



## Give

Donate to  
help others.



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