



Dear brothers and sisters in St. Francis of Assisi, may the Lord give you Peace.

Advent wreaths are circular, representing God's infinite love, and are usually made of evergreen leaves, which "represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus Christ". The four traditional advent themes for the four advent Sundays are: Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace. Many Advent wreaths also have a white candle in the centre to symbolize the arrival of Christmastide, sometimes known as the "Christ candle."

As we journey into the season of Advent, I wish that all of us are renewed in the Love of God, who came down from Heaven to create Love on the Earth (among us). I am sure all us long to live in a loving relationship with each other. To do this, we need to be first in love with God who has given us life and every blessing to live this life on the earth, but never forgetting that our journey does not end here but in Heaven.

Let us live in such a way that we make the best use of the talents God has given us, so that at the hour of our death our Lord will say "Well done, my good and faithful servant, come and share the joy of your master" (Mt: 25:21). Jesus invites us to use our talents primarily to serve God and do everything we can to carry out God's will. He challenges us to do something positive, constructive and life affirming with our talents here and now. I would encourage all of us not to bury our talents (like the third servant), but trade, make use of them responsibly.

These months have been hard and challenging for all us, not able to meet our loved ones, social distancing in place, having to live life in your own space and time, not able to gather in person for worship in the Church and so many other limitations. But this is not going to be the end of our story, one day things will again turn in our favour, meanwhile stay positive, hopeful and never give in to despair.

Let us find ways to connect to God and fellow humans around us. Love should be the only motivation to do this. Love is our guiding principle and force in life. Be sure to dedicate time to pray personally and with family, set up the Christmas crib at home, decorate the house and of course exchange gifts to each other not forgetting the less fortunate one among us. These are few ways we can bring the spirit of Christmas alive around us. Never know if we will be able to celebrate Christmas Mass this year in person, but even if unfortunately happens, let our love for Jesus find an expression in our living, be the best Eucharist people that we can be.

Let us do everything that we can to prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus on the day of Christmas and give the Birthday Boy the best gift we can ever give, the gift of our hearts so that He can continue to shepherd our lives.

