

THE JESSE TREE

Who Was Jesse?

The prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah's words helped people know that the One who was promised to them by God would be born into the family of Jesse.

*"A shoot shall sprout
from the stump of
Jesse and from his
roots a bud shall
blossom."*

Isaiah 11: 1-10

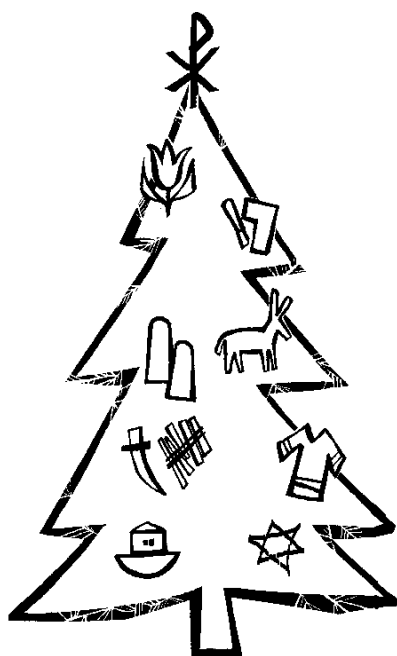
Jesse of Bethlehem had seven sons. Jesse's youngest son, David, watched over the sheep for him. One day the prophet Samuel came to Jesse's house and met David. Samuel anointed David. Many years later, David became King.

It was from Jesse that the family tree branched out to David and his descendants. Jesse and David were ancestors of Jesus. At the time of Jesus' birth all those who belonged to the family of David had to return to the town of Bethlehem because a census was being taken. Since Joseph and Mary were of the House of David, they had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem to register.

What Is the Jesse Tree?

The Jesse Tree is a special tree used during the season of Advent. The Jesse Tree represents the family tree of Jesus. It serves

as a reminder of the human family of Jesus. God gave His only Son as a perfect Gift to an imperfect people. The people who were the human ancestors of Christ, with the exception of Mary, were a sinful people, with faults and shortcomings. They were promised a Savior. Generations of people waited for the coming of a Messiah.



The uniqueness of the Jesse Tree comes from the ornaments that are used to decorate it. They are symbols that depict the ancestors of Jesus or a prophecy fulfilled at His coming. Christmas became necessary, when the need for a Redeemer arose. Traditionally, the Jesse Tree ornaments also included representations of the Adam, Eve and Creation. These symbolize the promise.

There are no set rules about which people should be included in this family tree. Ancestors of Jesus from

Mary and Joseph's side of the family can be selected. Mary and Joseph were both from the House of David somewhere along the tribal line.

A practical way to decide on the kind and number of symbols to be used can be based on the number of participants and the length of time allotted to the celebration. Usually Scripture or other readings about the symbol or person are read during the Jesse Tree celebration. Decorating a Jesse Tree can be a home, school or parish celebration. The symbolic ornaments should be discussed and made before the celebration.