

Advent is a season of waiting, preparation and hope. As we light the candles of the Advent wreath, the light gradually grows brighter, reminding us that Christmas is drawing near and that Christ, the Light of the World, is coming.

This year, we reflect on Many Stories, One Light.

The Advent story itself is made up of many stories. There is Mary's story of courage, Joseph's story of trust, the shepherds' story of wonder, the wise men's story of seeking, and countless others whose lives were changed by the coming of Jesus.

The Vincentian (SVP) family is made up of many stories too. Across different countries, centuries and walks of life, people have responded to God's call in unique ways. Their stories are all different, but each reflects the same light of Christ.
As we light each Advent candle, we remember one Vincentian story and consider how our own story can help bring God's light into the world.



Week One: Hope (Purple candle)

The first candle represents hope. When St Vincent de Paul was a young man, he could never have imagined the impact his life would have. His story was not perfect and neither was he. He experienced setbacks, disappointments and moments of uncertainty. Yet through these experiences he began to recognise God in people who were poor, forgotten and excluded.
What started with one encounter where he heard the confession of a dying man, grew into a movement that continues around the world today.
Vincent's story reminds us that hope often begins with noticing one person, one need or one opportunity to make a difference.
Vincent's light was hope. He trusted that God could work through ordinary people to transform lives. Today, many people carry that same light. Every act of kindness, every visit, every conversation and every effort to stand alongside another person continues the story that Vincent began.

Reflection Questions:

- What gives you hope?
- How might your story bring hope to someone else this Advent?

Prayer

God of Hope,
thank you for the story of St Vincent de Paul.
Help us to recognise that our story matters too.
May we bring hope to others and reflect the light of Christ in all we do.
Amen.

Watch this video to hear more about the mission of SVP members in bringing hope to their community.





Week Two: Peace (Purple Candle)

The second candle represents peace. Blessed Frédéric Ozanam was a student living in a world filled with disagreement and division. People argued about politics, faith and society. Many spoke about poverty, but few spent time with those experiencing it.
Frédéric chose a different path. Instead of debating from a distance, he listened. He visited families. He learned their names and heard their stories. He believed that every person had dignity and deserved to be seen, heard and valued.
Frédéric's light was peace built through encounter.
His story reminds us that peace begins when we stop seeing people as problems to solve and start seeing them as people to know.
Every time we listen, welcome someone or build understanding, we reflect the same light.

Reflection

- Whose story have you learned from recently?
- How could listening help bring peace to your community?

Prayer

God of Peace,
thank you for the story of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.
Teach us to listen with compassion and understanding.
May we recognise your light in every person we meet.
Amen.

Watch this video to hear how Yolanda found peace.



Week Three: Joy (Pink Candle)

The third candle represents joy. St Pier Giorgio Frassati's story looked very different from Vincent's or Frédéric's. He loved sport, mountains, friendship and adventure. He laughed often and enjoyed life fully.
Yet beneath all of this was a deep faith. Pier Giorgio spent time serving people experiencing poverty and quietly helping those in need. He understood that true joy comes not from what we have, but from sharing our lives with others.
Pier Giorgio's light was joy.
His story reminds us that there is no single way to be a saint, no single way to be a Vincentian and no single way to share God's love.
Each of us reflects Christ's light in our own unique way.

Reflection

- What gifts and passions make you who you are?
- How might they help bring joy to others?

Prayer

God of Joy,
thank you for the story of St Pier Giorgio Frassati.
Help us to use our gifts and talents generously.
May our lives bring joy and hope to those around us.
Amen.

Watch this video to hear where Lillian finds her joy.





Week Four: Love (Purple Candle)

The fourth candle represents love. St Louise de Marillac's story was one of compassion, determination and faith. She saw gifts in people that others overlooked and helped create opportunities for those gifts to flourish.
She understood that love is not simply something we feel. Love is something we do. Through her leadership, encouragement and care, countless people found ways to serve others and share God's love.
Louise's light was love in action.
Her story reminds us that every person has something valuable to offer. When we use our gifts in service of others, we help Christ's light shine more brightly in the world.

Reflection

- What gift has God given you that could help someone else?
- How can you put love into action this Advent?

Prayer

God of Love,
thank you for the story of St Louise de Marillac.
Help us to recognise the gifts you have given us.
May we use them generously to share your love with the world.
Amen.

Watch this video to hear how Margaret feels loved.



Christmas Day

The Christ Candle

Throughout Advent we have encountered four different stories.
A priest.
A student.
A young adult.
A leader.

Different centuries.
Different personalities.
Different gifts.
Different callings.

Many stories.
Yet each reflected the same light of Christ.
The white Christ Candle reminds us that Jesus is the source of every good thing we have reflected on this Advent: hope, peace, joy and love.
The story of Christmas is not only about people from the past. It is also about us.
God continues to write new stories today and together, through our different gifts, experiences and journeys, we reflect One Light.