



# Advent Reflection

**Day #19**

**Thursday, December 17**

Genesis 49:2, 8 – 1-; Matthew 1: 1- 17

Advent has always brought me thoughts of joy in anticipation of Christmas and celebrating the birth of Jesus. As a child, my family could not wait for Thanksgiving to pass, so our full attention can shift to Christmas. To assist in counting down the days we had a vintage Christmas wall-calendar. The calendar had a pouch of plush Velcro markers ranging from a reindeer to a French horn to a Santa. Every morning before school I would try to beat my sister downstairs to pick one from the pouch and stick to the calendar to mark down the days in December. Together with our Advent wreath, all counting down the days to Christmas Day and most of all, presents! As I read and reread today's readings, I reflected on the importance of family and what lies ahead.

In the gospel, Matthew is counting and listing all the ancestors that came before Jesus. Over 40 names, many of which I have never heard of! Matthew is counting on the generations and groups of fourteen generations that foretells the coming of the Messiah and our Christmas holiday, much like the patterns of my family's wall calendar tradition.

It's crazy to me to think of all the countless ancestors prior to the coming of Jesus; all preparing for the prophecy of the Messiah and the coming of Christ. I cannot help comparing my small family history to Jesus.

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Like most Americans, my ancestors came from foreign lands and from humble beginning, starting with my great grandparents at the turn of the 20th century. I do not know much of anything before their generations, but I can assure you there are no royalty like King David or honored patriarchs like Jacob in my family. However, like Advent, these passages focus on the future and coming of something great.

I may have moved out seven years ago, but my parents still have that wall calendar in the same spot. My Mom and Dad mark down each day every morning with the same joy and smiles that my sister and I did as little children. I used to think they were just continuing a family tradition, but now I am sure they are counting down the days when I can come home from the City and my sister from California, so the family is back together again. The time we spend has been less; even made worse this year with the public health restrictions and the increased workload from my job. As I reflect on this Advent, I cannot ignore my role as an emerging family leader and forget the importance of family whether it be leading my own in the future or taking to time to cherish what I have today.

*Reflection by Holy Name Cathedral Parishioner Michael Piccato, Jr.*