

## DECEMBER 2 2025 FATHER ROSHAN LOY D'SOUZA

A few years ago, a family I know had a large tree in their backyard. It was the heart of their home—a place where their children played, where birthday candles were blown out, and where summer evenings were spent sharing stories and laughter. It stood tall and strong, a living reminder of the beauty and stability of family life.

But one night, a powerful storm rushed through the neighborhood. Wind howled, rain hammered the houses, and lightning struck that tree with a force that shook the ground. In the morning, the family walked outside to see only a blackened stump where their beloved tree once stood. The children cried. The parents felt a deep sadness. Something that had been so alive, so dependable, was suddenly gone. They talked about digging it up entirely—removing the reminder of what was lost.

Winter passed. The snow melted. And one spring morning, as the family walked past the stump, they noticed something unexpected—a tiny green shoot pushing its way toward the sun. New life was emerging. The tree had not given up. It was growing again, quietly, humbly, and yet powerfully.

My friends, this is exactly the image Isaiah gives us today: “A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom.” To the people of Israel, life seemed cut down. Their kingdom, once glorious under King David, was now reduced to almost nothing. They felt like that stump—broken, defeated, and without hope.

But God had not abandoned them. Isaiah tells them that from what looks dead, God will bring new life. From the royal line of Jesse—David’s father—will come a Messiah. A quiet, humble beginning, like a small green shoot pushing through the soil. A King unlike any other—filled

with the Spirit of the Lord, defending the poor, lifting up the lowly, establishing peace where there had only been fear and enemies.

That peace is described so powerfully: wolves resting with lambs, lions lying beside calves, a child leading them. This isn't just poetic language. It's God revealing His dream for all creation—deep harmony, justice, and unity. A world where nothing and no one hurts or destroys. A world where the knowledge of God fills every heart.

We believe that this promise becomes flesh in Jesus Christ.

And in today's Gospel, Jesus rejoices! He praises the Father because the great mystery of salvation is revealed not to the proud or powerful, but to the childlike—those who are humble enough to notice God in small beginnings.

The learned scholars of His time missed Him. They wanted a strong warrior Messiah, someone who would dominate and conquer. Instead, God came as a baby in a manger. Instead of a mighty tree, a fragile shoot.

The disciples saw Him. Their hearts were open. Their eyes recognized the promise. That is why Jesus says to them: "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see."

Prophets and kings longed for this moment, longed for God's kingdom, longed for the Messiah—and now He is here.

And Jesus says the same to us today: Blessed are our eyes, if we can recognize Him.

Because the truth is, we all experience "stump moments" in our lives. Times when it feels like something good has been cut down:

— A relationship strained

- A job lost
- A diagnosis received
- Dreams that did not unfold the way we hoped
- A heart burdened by grief or regret

In those moments, we may feel like giving up. We may think there is no future, no growth, no hope.

But God whispers to us today:

Do not remove the stump. Watch for the shoot.

I am not finished with you yet.

God's new beginnings often start small and quietly:

- A simple prayer whispered in the dark
- A kind word that softens a hard heart
- A decision to forgive
- A step toward healing
- A child's trust reminding us how to believe again

These are the tiny, holy shoots of God's kingdom growing in us.

Advent is our time to look again—to pay attention to the quiet work of grace happening beneath the surface. To trust like children that God is still planting hope where we least expect it.

Christ is coming. The shoot is sprouting. Hope is alive. Amen.