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**THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT**  
**GENESIS 15:1-6 (NRSV) - ABRAHAM AND A FIELD OF STARS**

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After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in

my house is to be my heir." But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

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**REFLECTION BY FR. DANIEL**

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Abraham was promised to be the father of many nations and so he has become what we call the common father of many different world religions. On Abraham's part, it took faith that God would do what he promised he would do even when it seemed a bit hopeless. Abraham had no children with Sarah and so the hope of having the future of his household live on seemed pretty dark and impossible. God promised that he would have heirs as plentiful as the stars in the sky.

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The daily ornament to cut out and hang on your Jesse Tree



The scriptures end this section by saying that Abraham believed the Lord and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. In dark times, it is difficult to hang on to faith trusting that God does not leave us and will bring us forward in all that is good. We cannot see how he could do it and often have fear that does not allow us to trust him. When the Lord came to Abraham, his first words, like so many times in the Bible, are "Do not be afraid." The Lord could have said this for two reasons: Abraham was fearful because God has come to him and Abraham was fearful because he was not trusting that God was his shield as he said. God entered in time at Christmas to communicate that he has always been with us even when it seemed so hopeless.

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## **FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE**

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Noah and his family had children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and the whole earth became full of people again. Years after Noah, there was a man named Abraham. Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of God's people, the nation of Israel. God promised many people would come from his family. God told him to look up in the sky and see all the stars. When Abraham saw all the stars in the sky, God said that is how many people will have faith in the future and will become God's family. Abraham is called our father in the faith. Years before Jesus would be born God was planning and preparing his people for his coming. Jesus would come from Abraham's family.

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## **TALK TOGETHER AS A FAMILY**

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Have a discussion with your family about being a member of a faith community. There are many people and different faiths but most of them come from Abraham's faith. This makes us a family of faith and our family is big. We are brothers and sisters in the entire world and we are all connected. Jesus came to teach us how to be a family of God with our Father in heaven.

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