



## HOPE AND LOVE

Advent is a Latin word meaning 'coming'. It is the time when we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

During this season, we remember all God's promises in tradition and scripture, and the hope that the Lord will come again in glory.

The advent wreath was started in Germany to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world, 'Christ our light'. During these dark winter months, we can use the light of Christ to bring warmth, hope and love to many people.

God became man in Bethlehem – let us listen to what is happening to families close to where our holy family was born.

Right now, more than two million Gazans are struggling to survive on a tiny, walled sliver of land, no bigger than County Louth, forcibly cut off from the world.

Om is a mother-of-three children who knows the dreaded boom of bombs and missiles all too well. In May of this year, a rocket assault claimed two dozen lives in al-Shati, the refugee camp where

she and her family are struggling to make a life in Gaza. Om and her family – including her three young sons – are shut off behind the Gaza Wall. Few are allowed in. Fewer still are allowed out. At the age of just twenty-four, Om's eyes have seen enough heartbreak and tragedy to last a hundred lifetimes. In desperation, Om watched as severe malnutrition gripped. There was never enough food, never enough clean water.

Om learned that a local Trócaire partner in Gaza, Caritas Jerusalem, could help her precious son Ahmed – and through its medical clinic at the edge of al-Shati – help her and her family too. Today Ahmed is a healthier three-year-old boy on the road to recovery. This Advent we pray for Om and for all mothers. Like Mary and Joseph looking for help at this time before the birth of their son, we ask that Om may have somewhere to turn to receive the support and care that she and her family need.



Om and her three sons.  
Photo credit: Caritas  
Internationalis

Moment of silence

We pray:

For Om and her family. May the light of Christ bring ease to their struggle.

**Lord hear our prayer.** Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

For those in power. While we light the purple candle of Advent reminding us to forgive and reconcile, may leaders become aware of their faults and create a platform for change.

**Lord hear our prayer.** Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

For the hungry. Here in Ireland and around the world, we pray that each person will have enough food to eat.

**Lord hear our prayer.** Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

For ourselves. That we will be ready to welcome Christ into our hearts this Christmas.

**Lord hear our prayer.** Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Together we pray:

Loving Father, listen to our prayers, help our love and hope to shine on and brighten our world. Protect families everywhere, may their love for each other continue to grow.

Amen.

Information about Trócaire's Gifts of Love and our Christmas Campaign can be found here [Donate Now - Trócaire \(trocaire.org\)](https://trocaire.org)

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