



Narrator:

And the Teacher's heart was lighter still.

[3rd angel lights the third (rose) advent candle; time for quiet]

The fourth angel joined the group. The talk turned to the barriers the Teacher faced in life. Not just barriers of prejudice and injustice but also barriers of fear and shame that cut off teacher from student, teacher from fellow teacher and even the teacher from their own heart. The angel said:

4th Angel:

Beloved, you are meant for Love. Don't you see that you teach love with all you do?



When you break down the barriers of ignorance with knowledge and truth, you teach Love.

When you break down barriers of injustice by establishing good order in your classrooms, you teach Love.

When you break down the barriers of delusion by giving honest evaluation, you teach Love.

When you break down barriers caused by unjust social systems through acts of justice and caring, you teach Love.

Narrator:

And with that the Teacher's heart became as radiant as the night sky.

[4th angel lights the last advent candle; time for quiet]



The four companions revealed themselves to the teacher as the Angels of Hope, Faith, Joy and Love. They invited the Teacher to sing with them in the heavenly host as the magnificent Hallelujah swept over the night sky.

When the Teacher woke, the angels had gone, but in their place were four candles placed in a circle of greenery. A candle for each angel. A candle of hope, faith, joy and love for each week of Advent.

A candle to remind us that ours is a sacred vocation.



Angels In Advent

A Prayer Service



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Narrator:

The story goes that a teacher was one of those called to Bethlehem to be counted in the census. This was the same census that brought shepherds, kings and angels together in a stable.

As usual, the Teacher was late, having stayed after class to help a student. The Teacher wanted to be in Bethlehem by nightfall, but it was getting late and so decided to camp in a cave. A fire was lit for warmth. In the darkening twilight, mysterious and wonderful sounds came from the fields and hedgerows. It was as if the earth itself was trying to give voice to the portentous events that were to happen that night. But to speak for the earth is a job for angels. And, indeed, angels were about. But the Teacher was preoccupied with other thoughts: getting to Bethlehem, worry for the student just met, anger at the Roman persecution.



The Teacher was oblivious to the growing radiance as the angels gathered into ranks of Cherubim and Seraphim. A sharp-eyed angel noticed the pall of gloom surrounding the Teacher at the campfire. It was not right that this heavy heart blemish a night like this. And so a deputation from the heavenly host was commissioned to lighten the heart of the Teacher.

So it was that the first angel came up to the Teacher at his campfire in the guise of a common traveler. The Teacher welcomed this stranger who soon dispelled any fears the Teacher might have had. The conversation soon turned to the difficulties of teaching and the strain it had

on the Teacher's life.
The companion said these words:

1st Angel:

Every teacher is a missionary of hope.
You bring possibility into the lives of your students;
You make their roads into the future straighter and wider;
You equip those in your care with a map to guide them on their way.
You are indeed a messenger of hope.



Narrator:

And a light entered a corner of that Teacher's burdened heart.
[1st angel lights the first advent candle; time for quiet]

Soon, a second angel joined them. The Teacher spoke of the despair that was felt by teachers and students. Where could meaning be found in such a crazy world? A world in which the just were persecuted and the unjust became powerful.



The second angel responded:

2nd Angel:

Even when you don't know it, each act that creates learning about goodness is a prayer. And know that goodness isn't just moral action. Goodness is God's creation. And all that leads you to know God's creation: Its science, its history, its geography, its art, its expression in languages and mathematics and the skills we have in creating good lifestyles... All of these are blessed. Have faith, because you teach faith in all that you do.



Narrator:

And a light entered another corner of that Teacher's troubled heart.

[2nd angel lights the Second Advent candle; time for quiet]



The third angel joined the group. The angel listened to the sorrow the Teacher felt. The Teacher spoke of the frustration felt at the difficulties of teaching in a time when the authorities were oppressive and the public unsympathetic to the Teacher's difficulties. The Third angel responded this way:

3rd Angel:

I bring a message of joy. Remember my friend with joy in your heart that yours is a sacred and noble profession. Think of all the great people who have been teachers. You follow in the line of Moses, Miriam and David; Elijah, Ruth, and Jeremiah; Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Were they not all great teachers? Yours is a sacred tradition. And tonight there will be born the greatest teacher of all. A man they will call Rabbi, Teacher, more than any other title. He will use great speeches, demonstrations and parables to get across his Law of Love. You are in good company, my friend.

