



THE SEASON OF ADVENT

information sheet featuring prayers, readings, reflections, activities and songs

A PRAYER FOR ADVENT

Grant that your people, we pray,
almighty God,
may be ever watchful
for the coming of your Only
Begotten Son,
that, as author of our salvation
himself has taught us,
we may hasten, alert and with
lighted lamps,
to meet him when he comes.
Who lives and reigns with you in
the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Collect, Friday, Second Week of Advent



WATCHING, WAITING, JUST ANTICIPATING?

Advent is the period of the year during which the Church prepares for the celebration of the Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Since the tenth century the First Sunday of Advent has always marked the beginning of the Church's year in the Catholic Church. In the Eastern Church the season begins earlier in November. The beginning of Advent always follows the Feast of Christ the King, which is the last Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Advent is time of preparation. The word itself is derived from the Latin word 'Adventus' which means a 'coming'. It looks forward to the annual celebration of the birth of Jesus whose birth should be seen in both historical terms and, particularly, as a saving event: the coming of God in flesh – the Incarnation – saves and redeems humanity. Advent also has another aspect as it also looks to the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of time.

The idea of preparing for Easter during Lent is a widely recognised and practised tradition. The earliest suggestion of a period of Advent preparation for the birth of Jesus was towards the end of the 5th Century when St Perpetuus decreed a fast three times a week from the feast of St Martin, 11th November, until Christmas. It became a period of penance and fasting of 43 days, not unlike Lent, although somewhat less strict. It was commonly called St Martin's Lent. By the tenth century Advent, this period of time that we have... *(see over)*

COLOURS ON THE ADVENT WREATH

Various meanings have been attached to the advent wreath and its candles.

- Candle 1 (Purple)
Hope; 'Prophecy'; Isaiah
- Candle 2 (Purple)
Love; 'Bethlehem'; John the Baptist
- Candle 3 (Rose)
Joy; 'Shepherds'; Mary
- Candle 4 (Purple)
Peace; 'Angels'; the Magi
- Central Candle (White)
Christ



Wreath of candles



The star, light of Christ



The empty crib, awaiting Jesus

HAPPY NEW YEAR

...to prepare for Christmas, became the four weeks we have now and the rules of fasting were relaxed.

The four weeks of waiting and preparation before the Nativity of Our Lord can be a very blessed time. That said, waiting is tough and, with Advent, we have an enforced period of waiting. We can't make Christmas come any sooner and so have to deal with our impatience. Advent is also the best time to think about the Blessed Virgin Mary as we share in her patient expectation. It is also a great time to renew our prayer for unborn children as we await the Nativity of the boy, conceived in Mary's womb and who grew up to die on the Cross for the salvation of all. What a change, for Mary and all humanity, was rung by the angel Gabriel's announcement, what remarkable faith was shown by Our Lady in her acceptance of God's gift.

There are many traditions associated with Advent, the wreath, the Jesse tree, the candles and the calendar. Have a go at marking Advent in a special way.



Images from the Jesse Tree

READINGS DURING ADVENT

First Sunday (Year A)

Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14;
Matthew 24:37-44

First Sunday (Year B)

Isaiah 63:16-9,64:2-7;
1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37

First Sunday (Year C)

Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Second Sunday (Year A)

Isaiah 11:1-10; Romans 15:4-9;
Matthew 3:1-12

Second Sunday (Year B)

Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14;
Mark 1:1-8

Second Sunday (Year C)

Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11;
Luke 3:1-6

Third Sunday (Year A)

Isaiah 35:1-6,10; James 5:7-10;
Matthew 11:2-11

Third Sunday (Year B)

Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11; 1 Thessalonians
5:16-24; John 1:6-8,19-28

Third Sunday (Year C)

Zephaniah 3:14-18; Philippians 4:4-7;
Luke 3:10-18

Fourth Sunday (Year A)

Isaiah 7:10-14; Romans 1:1-7;
Matthew 1:18-24

Fourth Sunday (Year B)

Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12,14,16;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Fourth Sunday (Year C)

Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10;
Luke 1:39-45

HAVE A SING!

The singing of hymns and carols in the period leading up to Christmas is a fabulous tradition, take your pick! The Church says that some hymns, like *O Come, Emmanuel* are to be sung after 17 December as we get closer to Christmas. For more on the O Antiphons see: <http://www.catholic.org/clife/advent/advent.php?id=7>

HAVE A GO!

Try making a Jesse tree as a way of marking the journey to Christmas (also remember the coming of Jesus, not just as a child but, in glory at the end of time). More can be found on the images traditionally used for the tree and the related Scripture references on <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/meditations/jesstree.html>

Cyril of Jerusalem (d.386) The Twofold Coming of Jesus Christ

We preach not one coming only of Jesus Christ, but a second also, far more glorious than the first. Generally speaking, everything that concerns our Lord Jesus Christ is twofold. His birth is twofold: one, of God before time began; the other, of the Virgin in the fulness of time. His descent is twofold: one, unperceived like the dew falling on the fleece; the other, before the eyes of all, is yet to happen. In his first coming he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger. In his second coming he is clothed with light as with a garment. In his first coming he bore the cross, despising its shame; he will come a second time in glory accompanied by the hosts of angels.



The liturgical colour is purple
(or Rose on the 3rd Sunday).

