

## Introduction

The Church's year is structured around the life of Jesus Christ, his birth, his ministry, his death and his resurrection. The Liturgical calendar follows the seasons of the year and also reflects the seasons of our own lives.

The Liturgical year begins with Advent – a time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas. It is a time of waiting and recognising, of hope and of joy.

## The Advent Wreath

The primary symbol for the Advent season is the Advent wreath. The popular tradition is to place four Advent candles in a circle and light one to observe each week leading up to the celebration of Christmas. A fifth Advent candle in the centre is lit on Christmas Day. The purple colours represent contemplation and penance. The rose colour represents joy. We light the rose candle on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent. The white candle in the centre represents celebration, love and peace.

The Wreath is an important Advent symbol. It is made in the form of a ring. The ring is a symbol of eternity, since it has no beginning or end. It acts as a symbol for God who has no beginning or end.

Advent itself is a time when we prepare for the coming of Christ. As we light each of the candles on the wreath over the next few weeks we reflect on what Advent means in our own lives.



### Did you know...?

The word advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means arrival or coming.



### Did you know...?

Advent was established in the sixth century by Pope Gregory.

Catholic priests wear purple on the first, second and fourth week. During the third week they wear rose.



## First Sunday in Advent - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022



### Reflection

Advent is a time of waiting. We often find ourselves waiting for things in life, sometimes with impatience and sometimes in excited anticipation. Advent is a time when we look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

Preparations for Christmas can be busy. Unfortunately, rather than being a time of quiet reflection, during which we look forward to the Light of Christ coming into the world, these few weeks can become a time of hectic preparation for a very commercial Christmas!

But Advent is the time to come and rest, to find comfort and peace in our God. We can make this a time of personal preparation by using moments of waiting as moments for prayer – walking to and from school, in the queue for lunch; while waiting for the bus or waiting to meet a friend.

Rather than allowing impatience to overcome us, perhaps we could begin to see these spaces as gift; time to stop rushing; time to be still.

Waiting teaches us to be patient. By acknowledging Advent as a time of waiting, of hopeful expectation, of preparation, our Christmas will be all the more meaningful and enjoyable. Our waiting is always in hope and in this season of Advent, we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

### Over to you . . .

- How can you make this season a time of personal preparation?
- How can you include moments of prayer in your daily life?

**Light the first purple candle. This candle represents HOPE**



God of hope,  
awaken our hearts  
to You this Advent season  
and fill our hearts  
with hopeful anticipation  
of Your coming  
so that when Jesus arrives,  
we are ready to receive Him  
in our hearts and minds.  
Amen.



**Reader:** Father in heaven, we need the warmth of your love in our hearts and the light of your Word in our minds. Help us to grow in our faith so that we will be prepared and filled with **HOPE** when Jesus comes.

Jesus said, *“Let your goodness shine out like a light in the darkness, so that through you, the love of our heavenly Father will touch the lives of others.”* (Matt 5:16-17)

**Leader:** Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to the words of this prayer: *Dear God, In our own little way, help us to bring hope to all those who are afraid, sad or alone. We ask you to bring hope for tomorrow. Through us, shine your light of HOPE upon all we meet.* Amen

**Reader:** **May We Become...**

May we become a light for those in darkness,  
A source of hope for those in despair,  
A companion for those who are burdened,  
A peacemaker for those who are gripped with anger,  
A selfless giver for those who are without,  
A compassionate friend for those who mourn,  
A protector for those without protection,  
A bridge for those separated from love.  
On this day and onwards,  
May we become fully human, fully alive in the Spirit. Amen

**Over to you . . .**  
How can you be a source of hope to those around you?

### Concluding Prayer around the wreath

God our Father, you loved us so much that you sent your only son into the world to be our savior and friend. Bless us as we wait for the coming of your Son. Open our hearts so that we may recognise him when he comes and make him welcome - whatever form he might take. Bless this wreath which represents our waiting, our hope, our recognition and welcome of God's presence in our world. We make this prayer through your Son Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen

