



From the Deacon's Desk

Welcome to Advent!

Liturgical year "A" begins this weekend. The Gospel

readings are primarily from Mark; as well as John's Gospel.

There are four Sundays in Advent; however, there aren't four weeks this year. This year the fourth Sunday of Advent falls on 24 Dec. Our Sunday masses will be celebrated as the fourth Sunday of Advent [**THERE WILL BE NO 11:30 MASS ON THE 24TH**] and that afternoon we will begin our Christmas celebrations with two Masses at 4:30pm and one at 7:30pm. We welcome Christmas at the midnight Mass [incense will be used] and 9:00am Mass on Christmas day [no, attending one Mass on Sunday does not fulfill your Mass obligations ☺].

What we should be doing, what the church asks us to do, is the opposite of what some of us do. Advent is not about combat shopping or spending time on-line. Advent is the time to prepare for the birth of the Christ-child.

It'll be difficult this year to keep Advent and Christmas separated; the joyous nature of our Christmas decorations clash with more devout and expectant nature of Advent. The effort we make to honor both the Advent and Christmas seasons will help our families to "remember the reason for the season".

- Participate in the parish's prayer and Sacrament of Reconciliation opportunities on 5 Dec. Confession in Spanish will be available.
- Challenge yourself to various kinds of prayer; Sung Vespers at 7:00pm on 7 Dec and Taizé prayer at 7:00pm on 14 Dec
- Follow the Advent prayer traditions:
 - [Blessing the Advent Wreath](#)
 - [Blessings for lighting candles weekly](#)
 - [Blessing the Christmas Tree](#)
 - [Daily Advent Prayer for Families](#)
 - [Daily Advent Prayer for Families with young children](#)
- Have an advent wreath in your home
- Wait until after Mass before you put the presents under the tree
- Working as a family, construct your own Advent calendar with an activity for each day

The full Advent/Christmas schedule is in the bulletin. Won't you spend your Advent in prayer and reflection on Christ's birth? That's what Advent is for.

Christ's peace.

Deacon Mark

Blessing the Advent Wreath

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response: Who made heaven and earth.

Then the Scripture, [Isaiah 9](#): (lines 1-2 and 5-6) or [Isaiah 63](#) (lines 16-17 & 19) or [Isaiah 64](#) (lines 2-7) is read:

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

With hands joined, the leader says:

Lord our God,

we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

The blessing may conclude with a verse from the song "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

"O come, desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind;
bid ev'ry sad division cease
and be thyself our Prince of peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel."

[\[RETURN TO PRAYER TRADITIONS\]](#)

Prayers for Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles

First Week

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Second Week

God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Third Week

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Fourth Week

All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

[\[RETURN TO PRAYER TRADITIONS\]](#)

Blessing of the Christmas Tree

The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, [Titus 3:4](#) (lines 4-7) or [Ezekiel 17:22](#) (lines 22-24 4; I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.

The leader says the prayer with hands joined:

Lord our God,
we praise you for the light of creation:
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.
We praise you for the light of Israel:
the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:
he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,
who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we illumine this tree.
May the light and cheer it gives
be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.
May all who delight in this tree
come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from the song “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”:

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death’s dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

[\[RETURN TO PRAYER TRADITIONS\]](#)

Family Daily Advent Prayer

Lord God, we adore you because you have come to us in the past.
You have spoken to us in the Law of Israel.
You have challenged us in the words of the prophets.
You have shown us in Jesus what you are really like.

Lord God, we adore you because you still come to us now.
You come to us through other people and their love and concern for us.
You come to us through men and women who need our help.
You come to us as we worship you with your people.

Lord God, we adore you because you will come to us at the end.
You will be with us at the hour of death.
You will still reign supreme when all human institutions fail.
You will still be God when our history has run its course.

We welcome you, the God who comes.
Come to us now in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

[\[RETURN TO PRAYER TRADITIONS\]](#)

Advent Prayer for families with Young Children

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

[\[RETURN TO TOP\]](#)