

Christ is Coming!

The word Advent comes from Latin *adventus*, which means “arrival.” During the Advent season, we prepare our hearts and homes for two “arrivals” of Christ:

His First Coming

We prepare to celebrate the first coming of Jesus as a humble baby—acknowledging and worshiping Jesus the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

His Final Coming

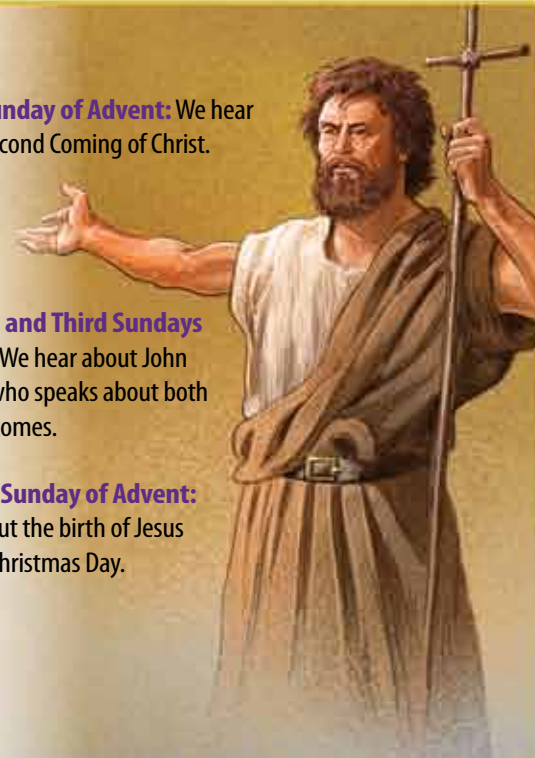
We prepare to meet the Second Coming of Jesus as judge, at our death and at the end of time.

“When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His second coming” (CCC 524). The Gospel readings for the four Sundays in Advent serve this purpose.

The First Sunday of Advent: We hear about the Second Coming of Christ.

The Second and Third Sundays of Advent: We hear about John the Baptist who speaks about both times Jesus comes.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent: We hear about the birth of Jesus on the first Christmas Day.



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Have the best family Advent ever!

At AdventAdventure.com you’ll learn more about these Catholic Advent and Christmas traditions, feasts, and celebrations—including printable blessings, activities, videos and audio prayers—sign up online for FREE. Kids ages 5-12 love it (*and Moms & Dads do, too!*)



The Best Jesse Tree Resources!

Get everything you need for fun & easy Jesse Tree activities this year: DVD, Activity book, a tree to hang up and stickers to place on each day! Or print off free ornaments to craft and color yourself! Find these and more at HolyHeroes.com/JesseTree.

HolyHeroes.com/Advent

Anything else you need for Advent? Candles, a wreath, an Advent & Christmas calendar? Find them and more helpful resources at HolyHeroes.com/Advent! Have a blessed Advent!

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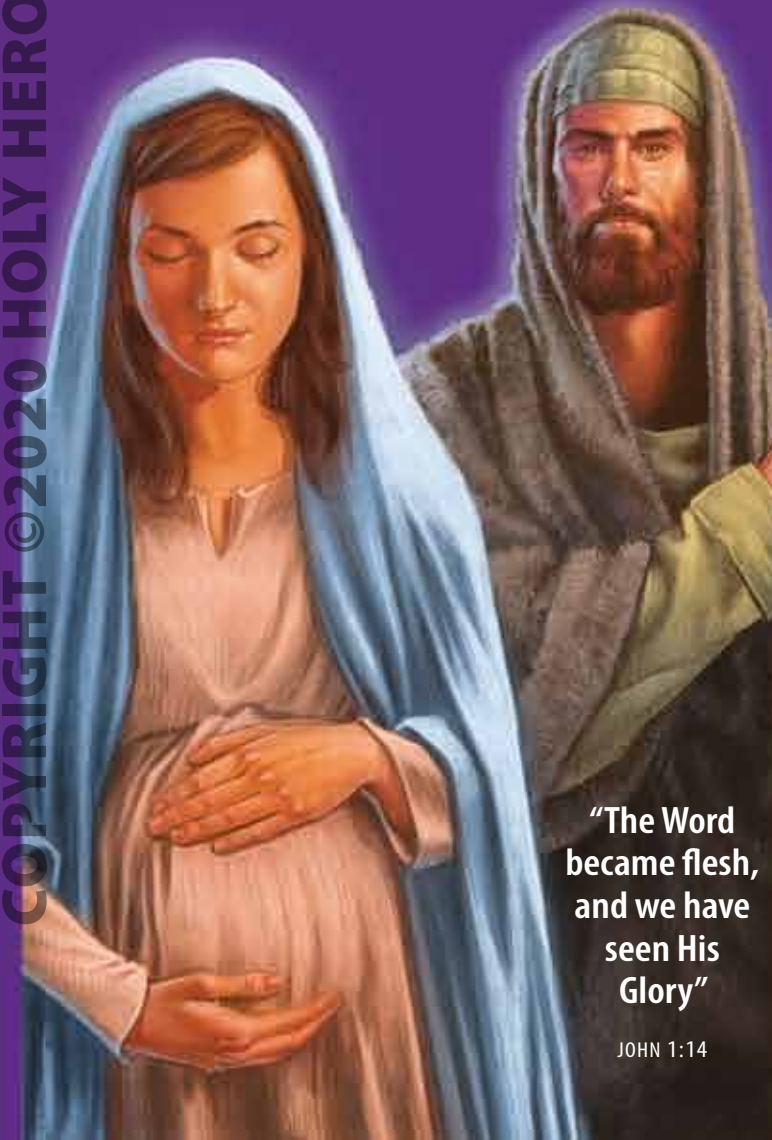
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HOW TO HAVE A

Fruitful Family ADVENT

ON YOUR JOURNEY TO CHRISTMAS

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“The Word became flesh, and we have seen His Glory”

JOHN 1:14

A Time of Preparation

The Advent Season is the beginning of the Church calendar. It always includes the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

The First Sunday of Advent can be as early as November 27 (making Advent 28 days) or as late as December 3 (then Advent is only 22 days).

In the mid-5th century, Pope Saint Leo the Great explained that Advent was a time for humble self-examination, fasting, and alms-giving for Christians to “prepare themselves worthily to celebrate the anniversary of the Lord’s coming into the world” at His birth.

Self-restraint and Self-donation

The season of Advent has been called a kind of “mini-Lent” because it is a time of both self-restraint and self-donation. Like Lent, violet, the color of penance and preparation, is the liturgical color of the Advent Season.

During the season of Advent, the Church refrains from praying the *Gloria* during Holy Mass until Christmas arrives. Recall that, “Glory to God in the Highest” (the first words of the *Gloria*) was the angelic proclamation to the shepherds on the night of Christ’s birth.

O God, Who see how Your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation, and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Collect, Third Sunday of Advent

The Second Coming of Christ

The First Sunday of Advent through the Saturday before the Third Sunday of Advent

The first half of Advent focuses on the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world. This time of quiet reflection is a way for the Church to remind the faithful that we should always be prepared for the Final Judgment.

“We do not preach only one advent of Christ, but a second also, far more glorious than the first. For the first gave us a glimpse of His patience; but the second brings with it the crown of a divine kingdom. In His former advent He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger; in His second, “He covers Himself with light as with a garment” (Ps 103:2).

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (313-350)

More than Four Sundays

To have a really fruitful family Advent, it is necessary to actively celebrate the liturgical feasts of the season! This involves attending Holy Mass on the four Sundays of Advent, but there are also weekday liturgical feasts that have a strong connection to the season. There are also family activities associated with certain feast days that will appeal to children’s imaginations and give them fond memories of the Advent season.

December 6

Saint Nicholas (*Patron of Children*)

Some families have the children put their shoes out the night before, to find some small gift or coins in them in the morning!

December 8

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Patroness of the USA*)

This Solemnity celebrates that the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin in the womb of her mother Saint Ann. (Look for this feast on the calendar—when it falls on Sunday, it is moved to December 9!)

December 12

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (*Patroness of the Americas*)

This feast day is so special that it is one of the few days in Advent that the *Gloria* is said during the Mass!

December 13

Saint Lucy (*Patroness of the Blind*)

Lucy means “light.” Tradition tells us that Lucy would wear a wreath with candles on her head to keep her hands free as she served the poor in the catacombs. In Sweden her feast day is celebrated by the eldest daughter serving the family breakfast of coffee and rolls while dressed in white with a wreath on her head!

Some Advent Family Traditions

There are many Catholic family activities and traditions that can enrich your home during the Advent season. Below are a few traditions especially good for the first half of Advent.

Advent Wreath with 3 purple and 1 pink candle.

Each Sunday of Advent light an additional candle so the wreath gives off more light as the *Light of the World* draws closer. During the week, light the appropriate number of candles and say a family prayer.

Jesse Tree with handmade paper ornaments.

Learn about the lineage of Jesus as you decorate your tree with ornaments of all the family members who came before Him. Go to holymen.com/jesstree for FREE Jesse Tree ornaments!

Sacrifice Manger filled with acts of love.

Make a soft manger for Baby Jesus and fill it with acts of kindness during the Advent season. Your family can make a paper “manger” and put a piece of “straw” (yarn or string) into it every time they help someone or make a sacrifice for one another. As the days of Advent progress, you’ll see your family’s love of neighbor “piling up” for Jesus! Get your sacrifice manger craft at holymen.com/Advent.

“Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father”

The First Coming of Christ

The Third Sunday of Advent through Christmas Eve

0 Antiphons on December 17–23

Beginning on December 17, the liturgy presents a series of seven “O Antiphons.” These short prayers are based on names for the Messiah as prophesied by Isaiah. You may recognize them from the hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. If you attend Mass on these seven days, you will hear one “O Antiphon” each day!

Dec 17: O Wisdom

Dec 21: O Radiant Dawn

Dec 18: O Lord of Lords

Dec 22: O King of all Nations

Dec 19: O Flower of Jesse’s Stem

Dec 23: O Emmanuel

Dec 20: O Key of David

The second half of Advent transitions to a time of joyful anticipation as we prepare our hearts and homes to celebrate the anniversary of the first coming of Christ—the arrival of Baby Jesus on Christmas morning!

Joyful Expectation!

The Third Sunday of Advent, known as *Gaudete Sunday*, presents a distinctively joyful liturgical message—Rejoice! *Gaudete* means “rejoice!” in Latin. You will notice that the priest wears rose-colored vestments at Mass on that Sunday, to remind us to prepare our hearts and our homes for Christmas! Light the rose (pink) candle on your Advent wreath.

More Advent Traditions

Christmas Tree with a Catholic blessing.

This is the traditional time to decorate your family’s Christmas tree and fill it with lights. You can get a Catholic blessing for your tree (*don’t light it until you bless it!*) at HolyHeroes.com/Advent.

Crèche or Nativity Scene with a Catholic blessing.

Saint Francis created the first Nativity crèche. Set up your crèche and contemplate the wonder of those who came to worship the Child Jesus. Get a blessing for your family’s crèche at HolyHeroes.com/Advent. Wait to place Baby Jesus in the manger until Christmas morning, and place the Magi in the scene on the feast of the Epiphany!

Presents for Jesus under the tree.

You can give Jesus presents, too (after all, it’s His birthday!) Just write a note, telling Him what prayers you’ll say, sacrifices you’ll make, or good deeds you’ll do for others—He’ll love all those things! Put your “presents” in an envelope and place it under the tree!

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Christmas is a Liturgical Season!

December 25 is the First Day of Christmas.

The Catholic Church celebrates the Birth of Our Lord with an entire liturgical season which begins with the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and continues through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in January. Have a very merry Christmas Season!

