



## BACKGROUND

### Symbolism and Prayers of the Advent Season 2008 (Year B)

#### Advent

Advent is the season of hope, preparation, expectation and celebration. The word advent is Latin for “a coming or arrival”. The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical year in the Western calendar. Advent is not limited to the preparation for the arrival of Christ’s birth but also a time to remind us of our redemption and of the second coming of Jesus that is to come.

#### The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is the most recognizable symbol of this season. An advent wreath is comprised of four candles that symbolize and focus our attention on the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. The wreath may consist of any material; however, evergreen branches are symbolic and a popular choice.

Making an Advent wreath and having a simple lighting ceremony each week for four weeks leading up to birth of Christ on December 25<sup>th</sup> often is the centre for family prayer during this period of preparation. The advent wreath may be lit along with the Christmas candle (the white candle put in the middle of the Advent wreath on December 25<sup>th</sup>) throughout the Christmas season until the Feast of Epiphany, the common close of the Christmas Season.

#### Symbolism of the Advent Wreath

- *Circle of the Advent Wreath* – represents the endlessness of time in which God remains united with humanity.
- *Evergreens* - symbolize the freshness and vitality of the relationship among God, humanity and of creation.
- *Four Candles and colour* – represent the progressive revelation of God - fully realized in the birth and life of Jesus. Purple: lit on the first, second and fourth Sundays of Advent represent waiting and repentance. Pink: lit on the third Sunday of Advent and represents a needed break from the sombreness of the other weeks and celebrates the approaching coming of Jesus. It is a time to reaffirm our personal preparations for a meaningful Christmas season.
- *White Christmas Candle* – at Christmas a white candle is placed in the center of the wreath, which symbolizes Jesus, the light of the world.

# Liturgical Focus/Theme of Each Week of Advent and Sample Prayers

Families and friends are encouraged gather and reflect on the Advent passages below to share more fully in the graces of the Advent season.

## First Sunday of Advent

Advent means “coming”. Focus on Jesus’ final coming as Lord and Judge. One purple candle is lit to represent the first week of this season of longing.

**Action:** What does Jesus want me to improve in my life during this season of grace? Start to work on this today.

**Year ‘B’ Reflection:** *We are God’s own children, his family, his people, his Church. He is ready to help us to turn back to him and to live without sin as we wait for the coming of Jesus. Are we ready to place our trust and our lives in Jesus’ hands?*

**Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us.** (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Father,  
we praise you for sending your Son  
to save us from our sins  
and to be light in our darkness.  
Bless us as we gather in his name,  
and bless this wreath as a sign of his light among us.**

**We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

**Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.**

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

**You are light in our darkness. R.**

**Son of God, save us from our sins. R.**

**Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.**

**Give your peace to all nations. R.**

**Be the joy of all who love you. R.**

**Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.**

**Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.**

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of “O come, O come, Emmanuel!” or another Advent Hymn.

## Second Sunday of Advent

Advent is a time of waiting for Christ to grow in our lives. Focus on Jesus' final coming as Lord and Judge. The first and second purple candles are lit to represent our steady movement through this season of waiting.

**Action:** With God's help I will make the Lord's road straight by working to get rid of one of my faults.

**Year 'B' Reflection:** *God brings us Good News: his people are to be forgiven. They are to make a straight road for him, and he will come to care for them and bring them peace and justice. As we wait for the Lord to come, we are to live a blameless life.*

**Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us.** (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Blessed are you, loving Father,  
Lord of heaven and earth:  
We give you glory and praise  
For loving us as your children  
And for sending your Son Jesus to save us.**

**We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

**Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.**

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

**You are light in our darkness. R.  
Son of God, save us from our sins. R.  
Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.  
Give your peace to all nations. R.  
Be the joy of all who love you. R.  
Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.  
Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.**

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All  
praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" or another Advent Hymn.

### **Third Sunday of Advent**

Advent is an occasion. Jesus is with us now, and still to come. Pink expresses the joyfulness of anticipation of His coming. One pink and two purple candles are lit. The pink candle signifies the fast approaching feast of Christmas. Eager anticipation replaces somber longing.

**Action:** Work with Jesus and his Spirit to root out your sins, and prepare a straight road for the Lord in your heart.

**Year 'B' Reflection:** *The Spirit of God has been poured on Jesus, who comes to save God's people and lead them to give him glory. God will make us perfect and keep us holy, but we have to work with him. Am I ready to let God do this in my life?*

**Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us.** (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Eternal Father,  
Send your Spirit into our hearts  
To conquer evil and make us holy.  
Let us share in the victory of Jesus over sin  
And grow in your love each day.**

**We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

**Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.**

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

**You are light in our darkness. R.  
Son of God, save us from our sins. R.  
Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.  
Give your peace to all nations. R.  
Be the joy of all who love you. R.  
Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.  
Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.**

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All  
praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" or another Advent Hymn.

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

Advent is preparation to celebrate our oneness with God in Jesus. All four candles are lit. The final purple candle is lit after the pink candle to signify the darkest hours before dawn.

**Action:** Look at your life: is there anything in it that is against God's will for you?

**Year 'B' Reflection:** *David's descendants will rule for ever: Jesus is our eternal king, and we sing his praises. We give God glory and praise through Jesus.*

**Let us ask our heavenly Father to bless us.** (All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Blessed are you, Holy Father:  
You have sent your Son to be our Lord,  
And have made him our king for ever.  
Help us to love him and follow him each day.**

**We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord,**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

**Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. R.**

Response (R.): All answer: ***Come, Lord Jesus.***

**You are light in our darkness. R.  
Son of God, save us from our sins. R.  
Bring hope into the lives of all people. R.  
Give your peace to all nations. R.  
Be the joy of all who love you. R.  
Bless us as we gather here in your name. R.  
Lord Jesus, stay with us. R.**

**May Christ give us his peace and joy, and let us share them with others. All  
praise and glory are his forever.**

(All answer) ***Amen!***

All may sing a verse of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" or another Advent Hymn.

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