



Series of bite sized liturgical points on *The Liturgical Year*.

litbits

NO 2 | 17

ADVENT

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V. Advent

Advent has a twofold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight.

Advent begins with First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of the Sunday that falls on or closest to 30 November and it ends before First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of Christmas.

The Sundays of this time of year are named the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Sundays of Advent.

The weekdays from 17 December up to and including 24 December are ordered in a more direct way to preparing for the Nativity of the Lord.

The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar
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Order for Blessing of an Advent Wreath

1509 The use of the Advent Wreath is a traditional practice which has found its place in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent. The blessing may be celebrated during Mass, a celebration of the word of God, or Evening Prayer.

1510 Customarily the Advent Wreath is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which are inserted four candles. According to tradition, three of the candles are violet and the fourth is rose. However, four violet or white candles may also be used.

1511 The candles represent the four weeks of Advent and the number of candles lighted each week corresponds to the number of the current week of Advent. The rose candle is lighted on the Third Sunday of Advent, also known as Gaudete Sunday.

1512 If the Advent Wreath is to be used in church, it should be of sufficient size to be visible to the congregation. It may be suspended from the ceiling or placed on a stand. If it is placed in the presbyterium, it should not interfere with the celebration of the liturgy, nor should it obscure the altar, lectern, or chair.

1513 When the Advent Wreath is used in church, on the Second and succeeding Sundays of Advent the candles are lighted either before Mass begins or immediately before the opening prayer; no additional rites or prayers are used.

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