

The Greater Days of Advent

December 17th - 23rd

The "O" Antiphons at Vespers

December 17:

O Wisdom that comest out of the mouth of the Most High, that reachest from one end to another, and orderest all things mightily and sweetly, come to teach us the way of prudence! *

December 18:

O Adonai, and Ruler of the house of Israel, Who didst appear unto Moses in the burning bush, and gavest him the law in Sinai, come to redeem us with an outstretched arm! *

December 19:

O Root of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people, at Whom the kings shall shut their mouths, Whom the Gentiles shall seek, come to deliver us, do not tarry. *

December 20:

O Key of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth, come to liberate the prisoner from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. *

December 21:

O Dayspring, Brightness of the everlasting light, Son of justice, come to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death! *

December 22:

O King of the Gentiles, yea, and desire thereof! O Corner-stone, that makest of two one, come to save man, whom Thou hast made out of the dust of the earth! *

December 23:

O Emmanuel, our King and our Law-giver, Longing of the Gentiles, yea, and salvation thereof, come to save us, O Lord our God! *

* Recite one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory be each night after the antiphon.

Christmas Eve

Traditionally Christmas Eve is a fast day with full abstinence from meat. The festivity can be celebrated with a special seafood dinner: even lobster, crab or shellfish because it is so special among vigils. Plan a festive breakfast to celebrate right after Midnight Mass.

Just Before Midnight:

The Christmas Proclamation *

In the five thousand one hundred and ninety-ninth year of the creation of the world, from the time when God in the beginning created the heaven and earth: the two thousand nine hundred and fifty-seventh year after the Flood: the two thousand and fifteenth year from the birth of Abraham: the one thousand five hundred and tenth year from Moses, and the going forth of the people of Israel from Egypt: the one thousand and thirty-second year from the anointing of David the King: in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel: in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad, the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome: the forty-second year of the rule of Octavianus Augustus, all the earth being at peace, in the sixth age of the history of the world, Jesus Christ, eternal God, and the Son of the Eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by His most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and nine months having passed since His conception [**here the voice is raised and all kneel**], is born as man, in Bethlehem of Judea, of the Virgin Mary. The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh."

* Roman Martyrology for Dec 25th from the Office of Prime

Advent Family Devotions



Preparation for a Holy Christmas at Home

St. Stephen Catholic Church, Portland, Oregon

The Advent Wreath

One way to prepare for Christ's coming is to use an Advent Wreath at home. It is traditionally made of evergreen branches in a ring with purple ribbon and 4 candles inserted into it (3 purple and 1 rose candle each representing the four weeks of Advent). Each day the family should gather around the Advent wreath, generally before the evening meal. It starts at the evening meal on the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent with the blessing of the wreath. (The father of the family traditionally leads the prayers, and a different child may be chosen to light the candles each day). Additionally, a scripture passage from the day's Mass could be read and/or an Advent hymn could be sung.



Prayers: *

Father/parent: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Father/parent: O God, by Whose word all things are sanctified, pour forth Thy blessing upon this wreath and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from Thee abundant graces. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

The wreath is then sprinkled with holy water.

Then follows the prayer which is said before the evening meal each night during that week. After the prayer, the candle or candles are lit.

* cf. The Year and Our Children by Mary Reed Newland

Prayers for the Advent Wreath

(continued)

1st Week of Advent: Ad te levávi Sunday

Father/parent: O Lord, we pray Thee, stir up Thy power, and come, that by Thy protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins, and to be saved by Thy deliverance, Who livest, and reignest, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

The candle is lit by the youngest child and allowed to burn during evening meals for the first week.

2nd Week of Advent: Populus Sion Sunday

Father/parent: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the ways of Thine Only-begotten Son, that we may attain to serve Thee with purified minds, through His advent. Who with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

After the prayer, the oldest child lights the first and second purple candles.

3rd Week of Advent: Gaudete Sunday

Father/parent: Incline Thine ear to our prayers, we beseech Thee, O Lord, and brighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Thy visitation. Who livest and reignest, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

The mother lights the pink, as well as the two previously burned purple candles

4th Week of Advent: Rorate Caeli Sunday

Father/parent: Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy power, and come, and succor us with great might, that, by the help of Thy grace, that which our sins do hinder, may be hastened by the bounty of Thy mercy. Who livest and reignest, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

All four candles are lit by the father of the family and allowed to burn during the evening meals of the fourth week.

During Christmas, the candles are changed to white.

The Christmas Novena

16th - 24th of any month

+++Prayer entirely each day+++

1. Eternal Father, I offer to Thine honor and glory, for my eternal salvation and for the salvation of the whole world, the mystery of the birth of our divine Redeemer. Glory be ...

2. Eternal Father, I offer to Thine honor and glory, for my eternal salvation and for the salvation of the whole world, the sufferings of the most holy Virgin and Saint Joseph on that long and weary journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and the anguish of their hearts at not finding a place of shelter when the Saviour of the world was about to be born. Glory be ...

3. Eternal Father, I offer to Thine honor and glory, for my eternal salvation and for the salvation of the whole world, the sufferings of Jesus in the manger where He was born, the cold He suffered, the tears He shed and His tender infant cries. Glory be ...

4. Eternal Father, I offer to Thine honor and glory, for my eternal salvation and for the salvation of the whole world, the pain which the divine Child Jesus felt in His tender Body, when He submitted to the rite of circumcision: I offer Thee that Precious Blood which He then first shed for the salvation of all mankind. Glory be ...

5. Eternal Father, I offer to Thine honor and glory, for my eternal salvation and for the salvation of the whole world, the humility, mortification, patience, charity and all the virtues of the Child Jesus: I thank Thee, I love Thee, and I bless Thee infinitely for this ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. Glory be...

V. The Word was made flesh: (genuflect)

R. And dwelt amongst us.

Let us pray. (stand)

O God, Whose only-begotten Son hath appeared in the substance of our flesh: grant, we beseech Thee, that through Him, whom we acknowledge to have been outwardly like unto us, we may deserve to be renewed in our inward selves. Who liveth and reigneth with Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

(S.C. Ind., Sept. 23, 1846; S. P. Ap., Oct. 14, 1934).