


ADVENT CALENDAR 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>The First Sunday of Advent Begin your Advent journey by blessing your Advent wreath. Light the first violet candle and sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">NOVEMBER 29</p>	<p>Make a resolution at the start of this liturgical year that will bring you closer to Christ.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">30</p>	<p>Today is Giving Tuesday! Many of our parishes have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consider making a recurring gift to your parish.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DECEMBER 1</p>	<p>Use this Advent season to ready your heart for Jesus. In what ways can you improve your relationship with him?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>	<p>Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, Priest In honor of St. Francis Xavier, one of the first Jesuits, try the practice of the Daily Examen.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<p>"Social friendship and universal fraternity necessarily call for an acknowledgement of <i>the worth of every human person</i>, always and everywhere." <i>(Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 106)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	<p>Advent is a season of waiting and anticipation of the birth of Christ. It can be easy to lose sight of this, focusing more on gift giving and receiving. Set aside time to pray with your family, even virtually, to refocus on the greatest gift.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>
<p>The Second Sunday of Advent "A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!" <i>(Isaiah 40)</i> How are you and your loved ones preparing for the coming of Jesus?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6</p>	<p>Today is the Memorial of St. Ambrose, one of the Doctors of the Church. He baptized St. Augustine and is the patron saint of catechumens. Today, pray for those seeking to join the Church.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">7</p>	<p>On this Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Hail Mary before meals. As Mary is also the patroness of the U.S., take time to pray for our country today.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8</p>	<p>This year has been challenging for many. Bring joy to someone today. Text or call a friend, help a stranger in need, or share today's Gospel with your loved ones</p> <p style="text-align: right;">9</p>	<p>Walking with Moms in Need encourages us to "walk in the shoes" of local pregnant and parenting women in need and to learn how we can help. Take the pledge today!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">10</p>	<p>"In some areas of our cities, there is still a lively sense of neighborhood...Where people experience a closeness marked by gratitude, solidarity and reciprocity." <i>(Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 152)</i> Seek out volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood this week.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11</p>	<p>On her feast day, pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe, that she may "help us never to see others as burdens," especially migrants to our country and communities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">12</p>
<p>The Third Sunday of Advent Today is Gaudete Sunday when we shift our reflection from "the Lord is coming" to "the Lord is near." Rejoice as you light the pink candle on your Advent wreath.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13</p>	<p>Memorial of St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church There are 10 days left in Advent. In honor of a saint known for his deep spirituality and compassion, reflect honestly on your own spiritual journey so far this season.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14</p>	<p>"As couples or friends, we find that our hearts expand as we step out of ourselves and embrace others." <i>(Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 89)</i> How can you embrace others today?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">15</p>	<p>Las Posadas, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter before the birth of Jesus, traditionally begins today. Pray for migrants seeking shelter around the world.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">16</p>	<p>Today marks the beginning of the "O Antiphons." This tradition, which comes from Evening Prayer, has been around since at least the eighth century.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">17</p>	<p>In today's Gospel we are reminded of St. Joseph's courage. Reflect on how God is calling you to demonstrate courage in serving him.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">18</p>	<p>What's your favorite Christmas movie? Gather your friends or family (in-person or virtually) and watch a Christmas classic.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">19</p>
<p>The Fourth Sunday of Advent "Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'" <i>(Lk 1:38)</i> Mary had complete trust in God, saying "yes" to his will. How would you describe your trust in God?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">20</p>	<p>St. Francis of Assisi made the Christmas crèche, or manger, for Christmas Eve of 1223. Gather your loved ones, and bless your family's crèche.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">21</p>	<p>"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph themselves were refugees in Egypt...with whom Christian migrants and refugees throughout the ages can identify, giving them hope and courage." <i>(USCCB, Strangers No Longer, no. 26)</i> How can you welcome the stranger today?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">22</p>	<p>According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and remains in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany. Share this blessing with your family and friends.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">23</p>	<p>"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he has come to his people and set them free." <i>(Lk 1:68)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">24</p>		



THE ADVENT WREATH

One of the beautiful Catholic traditions practiced in homes and churches during Advent, is the lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath as we pray and prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Traditionally, Advent wreaths are constructed of a circle of evergreen branches. The circular shape represents the eternal nature of God, with no beginning or end. The evergreen is a plant which stays green and full of life year-round, even through the cold and dark of winter which reminds us of Jesus overcoming the darkness of sin and death to bring all of us into new life.

Four candles are inserted into the wreath, representing the four weeks of Advent. Ideally, three candles are purple symbolizing the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken at this time. One candle is rose colored. It is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas.

The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of his second coming to judge the living and the dead.

Families are encouraged to gather around the wreath each day of Advent, light the candles and spend time in prayer together.

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH *(first Sunday of Advent)*

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

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response (R/.) 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.

R/. 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.

R/. Amen.

The blessing may conclude with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel".

-From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers (USCCB)

PRAYERS FOR ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The following are suggested prayers to use during Advent:

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

Father, 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.

-Prayers taken from A Prayer Book of Catholic Devotions (by William Story)

