



# What Makes us Catholic?

## Advent

The liturgical year begins with the Advent season and starts four Sundays prior to Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation. During Advent, our thoughts are directed to the coming(s) of Christ...at Christmas, in our hearts through the sacraments, and at the Second Coming. The Church itself is decorated minimally during this season. The liturgical color is violet, if possible, to contrast with the penitential purple of the Lenten season. One of the most festive songs sung at Mass - the Gloria - is omitted during Advent.

The most familiar Advent decoration is the Advent wreath. The wreath is displayed in the church and has three purple candles and one pink candle. One candle is lit on each of the Sundays of Advent. The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday, known as Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. On that Sunday, the Priest can wear rose or similar colored vestments. Since Advent marks the beginning of the Church year, you will notice new Breaking Bread books in the pews.

Advent is a season that can be easily overlooked as the preparations for and celebrations of Christmas often overtake it in our culture. But, Advent is a time of quiet. It is a time of noticing the extraordinary in the ordinary. A time of preparing our hearts to remember the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future. And, as we pray at the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, it is a time to 'await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ'.

See below and watch the bulletin for ideas on how to celebrate Advent in your own life, through various events in our community, books and daily email reflections.

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### *Want to read more about this topic?*

#### **Sources:**

##### **Book:**

*Advent and Christmas with the Saints* by Anthony F. Chiffolo

##### **Websites:**

<http://catholicism.about.com/od/holydaysandholidays/p/Advent.htm>

<http://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/advent/sacred-advent-retreat>

<http://dynamiccatholic.com/best-advent-ever/>

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