

## Beginning a New Year

Liturgically, our new year begins on the First Sunday of Advent. Therefore, the period of Advent is an especially appropriate time for making new-year resolutions for our spiritual lives. We can think of our resolutions according to three categories:

### **Spiritual Reading:**

What will you read this Advent to help you grow in love and understanding of Our Lord?

### **Prayers:**

How could you improve your prayer life? Ideas include making a Morning Offering, praying the Rosary, spending time in Adoration, attending daily Mass, and praying the Advent prayer (front page).

### **Alms:**

Using your time, talent, and treasure, what could you give to your family, your friends, your parish,

## Advent Reading Suggestions

### **Redemptoris Mater (Mary: God's Yes to Man)**

by St. Pope John Paul II (on Formed.org)\*

### **The Blessings of Christmas**

by Joseph Ratzinger (on Formed.org)\*

### **Advent of the Heart: Seasonal Sermons and Prison Writings**

by Alfred Delp (on Formed.org)\*

### **Around the Year with the von Trapp Family**

by Maria Augusta von Trapp

### **The True Meaning of Christmas**

by Fulton J. Sheen

### **Sermons of St. Francis de Sales for Advent**

\*To access Formed using St. Paul's account:

Go to [www.FORMED.org](http://www.FORMED.org)

Use the code CW4J7P and follow instructions.

## Preparing the Manger

Preparing the manger is a fun way for children to get ready for Christmas. A soft bed in the manger is made for the Baby Jesus by using wisps of straw (or yarn) as tokens of prayers and good works performed through the season of Advent.

There are many ways to do this. The family can have one empty manger or crib into which the children add a straw for each extra prayer, good work, or sacrifice made. Alternatively, each child can have his own small manger (made out of wood or even paper) to prepare for the Christ Child.

Watching the straw pile up as the good works increase is exciting, knowing they represent our gifts to Jesus.

Then, at the end of Advent, a lovingly padded crib awaits the Christ Child.



December 9<sup>th</sup>  
*Feast of the Immaculate  
Conception of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary*

*Mark Your  
Calendars!  
Advent begins  
Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>*

## Other Resources

<http://usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/index.cfm>

<https://www.ewtn.com/advent>

**Gifts for the Christ  
Child: My Resolutions  
Spiritual Reading**

*Prayers*

*Alms*

# WHAT IS

# Advent?

Advent: from the Latin *Advenire* (to come to)

## *Christ is coming!*

This is the message of Advent. It is a season of preparation. We are preparing for the threefold coming of Christ: the birth of the Christ Child at Christmas, His coming into our lives through the sacraments (especially in Holy Communion), and His Second Coming at the end of time. Advent marks the start of a new Church year, but unlike the New Year's of the secular calendar, we wait prayerfully and celebrate later. As we wait with joyful expectation, the best ways to prepare for Christ's coming are prayer and penance, cleansing our souls in order to draw closer to Him. Many of our neighbors and the world around us will not be observing Advent. They will be in the rush to Christmas, sometimes happy, sometimes frantic. The temptation is to join that rush. To the degree we remember our need for a quieter, more thoughtful and prayerful time, God will open our hearts to receive Jesus – both as infant Savior and as King and Judge. The Church has given us many ways to do this; more about them as we receive the gift of our journey together through the four Sundays and weeks of Advent.

Traditionally, Catholics began praying this prayer on the feast of St. Andrew (Nov. 30) to prepare for Christ's coming and to ask of Him a special favor.

### ***Advent Prayer***

*Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, [here mention your request] through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ and of His blessed Mother.  
Amen.*



Watch your bulletin for more helpful information about this beautiful season!  
*Wishing you  
a Blessed Advent!*  
Your friends in our local  
Fr. James E. Coyle  
Council 9862 of the Knights of  
Columbus

### ***The Advent Wreath***

The circle symbolizes the eternity of God, and the evergreens remind us of the soul's life and immortality. We remember that Jesus is the Light of the World as we light the candles, illuminating our spiritual darkness. Advent is a penitential season, so the candles are purple except for the rose candle used on Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday.

