

The FIAT Newsletter

A Family Ministry Publication

St. Robert Bellarmine Parish & School, Omaha, NE.

Advent 2011

Advent

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year. It is a season of joyful penance and spiritual preparation. Advent is a time to rediscover Jesus' role in our past, present, and future. Advent provides:

- a time to recall the promise God made to send the Messiah.
- a time to prepare to intimately encounter Jesus in your midst.
- a time to prepare for and to anticipate Jesus' return in glory.

Nurture Christ's grace within your life this Advent.



An Advent Prayer Plan

Find ways that work for you and your family

Advent wreath - Display the wreath in a prominent place in the home. Use at mealtimes or evening prayer. For a simple Advent wreath ceremony, light the candle(s), recite the weekly prayer or read from the scriptures for the day. (See suggested Advent Wreath Prayers to the right.)

Jesse Tree - The Jesse Tree is a retelling of the story of the family tree of Jesus. It is a simple and effective way to recall the promise God made to send the Messiah. Each day of Advent, display a symbol that represents a biblical person connected with Christ's coming, and read the appropriate Scripture text. Kits can be homemade or purchased. Download materials at www.eriescd.org/jesstree.htm or www.domestic-church.com.

Attend a Weekday Mass - Carve out some time to worship as a family at a weekday Mass during Advent. If you have to inconvenience yourself, offer the sacrifice for a friend or family member who needs God's help.

Spend time before the Blessed Sacrament - Create some quiet time amid the hectic pace of life. The presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is as real today as the infant Jesus who the Wise Men sought to pay homage.

Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation - Prepare your heart for Jesus' coming and experience God's healing mercy and love.

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Advent Wreath Prayers

Some families gather around the Advent wreath once a week; others light the wreath every day for meal prayer or evening prayer. Whatever your family custom, you may wish to use these Advent wreath prayers.

First Week of Advent:

Leader: Welcome, Lord Jesus into your hearts and into our home this Advent season. We are grateful for your coming!

Release us from the worries of our lives so that we can anticipate with joy the celebration of your birth.

Bless the food and family gathered at this table. Strengthen us and, by the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to bring the good news of your presence to those who are most in need.

All: Come, Lord Jesus.

(cont'd on reverse side)

Source: Archdiocese of Omaha

Did you Know?

The Gloria has undergone some revisions in the new translation of the Roman Missal. However, because Advent is a liturgical season of preparation, the Gloria is omitted during this time. So the first time we offer this prayer, post translation, will be at the Christmas Eve Mass.

Take some time to explore the Advent Resources available in St. Robert's Parish Library, local Catholic Bookstores, and on the internet!

An Advent Prayer Plan

Find ways that work for you and your family
(cont'd)

Soften Jesus' Manger – Help children make a simple manger out of cardboard or craft sticks. For each sacrifice during Advent, place a piece of hay in the manger to prepare for Jesus' coming.

Perform Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy - Practice sacrificial daily "dying to self". Recall John the Baptist's words that, "He must increase, I must decrease." (John 3:30)

Pray the Angelus - The Angelus is a traditional devotion that honors Mary's role in the Incarnation, when the Son of God became man. Turn to Mary as a model in living according to God's plan.

Shopping during Advent

Dear God, as I look through my gift shopping list, I hold up to you each person listed on it. Slowly, one by one, I ask that the fire of your abundant love burn within each of them. I pray that the gift I find for each person will bring joy into that life.

But, help me to keep a balance this season, Lord. Let me keep my buying in perspective, not to spend more than I need to or can afford. Let me not give in to the pressures of this world and not equate love with money spent. Let me always remember the many, many people who have so much less in material things. Help me to buy wisely, so that my choices will not burden those in other countries who are so deeply affected by this country's economy.

And finally, loving God, help me to find time in the frantic moments of each day to become centered on you. Walking through a store, riding on the bus, hurrying down a street, let each of these times be moments when I can remember your incredible love for me and rejoice in it.

Source: onlineministries.creighton.edu

The Christian family finds and consolidates its identity in prayer. Make the daily effort to find a time to pray together, to talk to our Lord and listen to His voice.

—Blessed Pope John Paul II

Advent Wreath Prayers

(cont'd)

Second Week of Advent:

Leader: In the midst of holiday busy-ness, we quiet our hearts to think about how we can prepare the way of the Lord. Help us, loving God, to love and serve one another and to create peace in our home and in our world.

Oh God, open our eyes to see Your saving works. Gently direct us away from our sinful ways so that we can accept the gift of Jesus.

Bless the food and family gathered here. Reconcile us to Yourself and to one another. By the power of the Holy Spirit, prepare a place in our lives for your coming.

All: Holy Spirit, prepare our hearts.

Third Week of Advent:

Leader: We rejoice that Jesus, whose birth we celebrate, is already 'in our midst' in the Eucharist, in the Scriptures and in the sacrament of one another. Open our hearts, Loving God, to receive His saving love in this Holy Season.

With gratitude we anticipate your coming, Lord Jesus. You are a faithful God, rich in kindness and mercy. Your presence with us gives hope to a troubled world.

Bless the food and family gathered at this table. Help us not to lose ourselves in holiday activities but to celebrate with joy the faithful presence of Jesus among us.

All: Rejoice the Lord is near.

Fourth Week of Advent:

Leader: Loving God, on Christmas we celebrate your entry into our human family in Jesus. You are both new-born and forever-alive with us today. We praise you for your goodness to us.

Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, said 'yes' when asked to give birth to Jesus. Help us to say yes to your will for us. Deepen our faith and hope in You.

Bless the food and family gathered at this table. Renew us and help us to see Jesus and to be Jesus to the world. Teach us to give ourselves as Mary did to the coming of Christ among us.

All: Give thanks to God for Jesus.

(Source: Archdiocese of Omaha)

Find intimacy with God this Advent!

Creighton's Online Ministries

search

"Praying Advent 2011"

or

www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent