

Some Bulletin/Parish Website reflections

The meaning of Advent

The word 'Advent' is from the Latin '*Adventus*,' meaning 'coming.' Advent marks the beginning of a new Church year and lasts from the fourth Sunday before Christmas, until the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. Advent is a period of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to the time when Christ will come again and to the remembrance and celebration of the first coming of Christ to us at Christmas.

The meaning of the Advent Wreath

The advent wreath has a rich meaning. The circle of the wreath, with no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God. The evergreen reminds us of the everlasting life we have in Christ while any pine cones or pods in the wreath represent new life and resurrection. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. Purple is traditionally a colour of penance and prayer while the rose pink candle that is lit on the Third Sunday marks our joy as we move ever closer to Christmas.



"If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. Christ takes nothing away and gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life."
(Pope Benedict XVI)

Advent is a waiting time,

- we await the celebration of the birth of Jesus.
- we await Christ's second coming,
- but God waits for us too.

God lives today, and so...

Our first challenge is to bring Jesus to life in our own living, to become aware of his presence. the presence of the Spirit working within us, prompting us, sustaining us, working through us, waiting for us.

Since the coming of Christ goes on forever – he is always he who is to come in the world and in the Church – there is always an Advent going on.

(Jean Danielou)



No One can celebrate a genuine Christmas without being truly poor. The self-sufficient, the proud, those who, because they have everything, look down on others, those who have no need even of God – for them there will be no Christmas. Only the poor, the hungry, those who need someone to come on their behalf, will have that someone. That someone is God, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Without poverty of Spirit there can be no abundance of God.

(Oscar Romero)

We are the people of Advent...

for Advent is now and not just back then. Therefore we can see all the characters of Advent that was 'then' in our Advent which is 'now'. Where in our lives is John the Baptist, provoking us to become more aware of new things happening in our lives? Where is Zachariah in our lives, not immediately open to what is so new, so hard to understand? Where is Elizabeth, so ready, through the wisdom of living, to appreciate the coming of the Lord? Where is Joseph, so gracious when all was so strange? And where is Mary in us, trusting in the providence given to her, welcoming the word in her heart? For, where we find Mary in ourselves, there we find Christ being born in our souls.

Are you ready? Just take one moment.

It's almost Christmas Eve. Are you tired? It's been a long journey to the Bethlehem barn. Are you ready for Christmas? Gifts wrapped, tree decorated, crib in place, food bought. But are *you* ready? Are you filled with wonder at this God of ours who loves us, who forgives us, who wants us, who gives his very own Son to be our saviour? Are you ready to sing Alleluia with the heavenly choir? Take a moment – take a moment to savour and welcome what all the preparations have been for: God is with us.