

Advent, a time of preparation, begins Dec. 2

Catholics throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore and around the world will mark the beginning of Advent Dec. 2. The four-week period of preparation for the coming of Christ also marks the start of a new liturgical year in the Catholic Church.

“Advent” comes from the Latin word for “coming,” anticipating both Christ’s coming at his birth on Christmas and his second coming.

Follow tried-and-true symbols to keep Jesus at the center of the season. Here is the meaning behind them:

Advent Wreath

Made from evergreens in the shape of a circle, the wreath signifies eternal life. The four candles symbolize the weeks leading to the Feast of the Nativity. The first, second and fourth weeks’ purple candles symbolize waiting and preparation. The third, rose-colored, is lit on the third, or Gaudete Sunday, the midpoint of the season and a time of rejoicing.



Vestments



Commercialized Christmas colors include reds and greens, but the color of the vestments worn by priests during the season - purple - highlights the longing and anticipation during the preparation of the coming of Christ. Purple symbolizes royalty and wealth - historically, purple dye was very expensive.

Moderation

During Advent, the Gloria is not sung, and instruments are used in moderation to reflect the season's preparation for Christmas. Flowers are also used in moderation, allowing the joy of the Feast of the Nativity to become apparent.



Absence



Holding the baby Jesus out of Nativity scenes until Dec. 25 reminds us of the distinction between the seasons of Advent and Christmas, which extends to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 13.

Looking for a parish to attend Mass this Advent? Click [here](#).