

Advent Blessings and Traditions

Blessing of the Advent Wreath: The use of the Advent Wreath is a traditional practice which has found its place in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent. When the blessing of the Advent Wreath is celebrated in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another member of the family.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response (R/.) Who made heaven and earth.

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing; They rejoice before you as people rejoice at harvest, as they exult when dividing the spoils. For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, Upon David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains By judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

With hands joined, the leader says:

Lord our God,
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:
he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,
he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,
he is the Savior of every nation.
Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we light the candles of this wreath.
May the wreath and its light
be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.
May he come quickly and not delay.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

The blessing may conclude with a verse from
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

O come, desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind;
bid ev'ry sad division cease
and be thyself our Prince of peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

—From [*Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*](#)



Blessing of a Christmas Crèche

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

A reading from the Gospel of Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus* that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son.* She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.
R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The leader prays with hands joined:
God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

—From *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

****Remember to bring your “Bambino” or Baby Jesus from your crèche to Mass on Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday of Advent) for a special blessing!****

A great tradition is to have your wise men and camels “travel” to the crèche from Christmas to Epiphany—have your children move them closer each day from 25 December to 6 January.

1st Sunday of Advent: Set up a table with your stable. Have a bowl of straw next to the manger.

2nd Sunday of Advent: Place the animals in the manger.

3rd Sunday of Advent: Place the Shepherds in the manger.

4th Sunday of Advent: Place Mary and Joseph in the Manger. The baby Jesus does not go in until after Christmas Mass

Every evening when your family gathers for night time prayer, invite each member to prayerfully reflect on the day. Give God thanks for the gift of that day and recall how many Advent prayers, sacrifices, acts of kindness each family member made. For each prayer, sacrifice and act of kindness, take one piece of straw and place it in the empty manger. If you do this each day of Advent, the prayers and sacrifices and acts of kindness will become the padding on which you lay the baby Jesus on Christmas morning.

Blessing of a Christmas Tree

Father or Leader. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All. Who hath made Heaven and earth.

Antiphon (all). All the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord, for He comes.

Psalm 95 (divide the group and alternate reading the lines).

This Psalm begs us to praise the Lord and sings of His coming at the end of time. Our Lord warned us to watch for the signs of His Second Coming in the Gospel for the first Sunday in Advent. We add to this, this night, our anticipation of another celebration of His first coming.

Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all ye lands: Sing to the Lord, bless His name, announce His salvation, day after day:

Among the heathen tell His glory, His marvels to every people.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, to be feared more than all the gods:

The gods of the heathen are nothings, but the Lord----He made the Heaven.

Glory and majesty stand before Him, strength and splendor are in His sanctuary.

Declare to the Lord, ye families of nations, declare to the Lord His glory and strength:

declare to the Lord the glory of His name:

Offer sacrifice and come into His courts: worship the Lord in holy attire,

Tremble before Him, all the earth! say among the nations: The Lord is King.

He has set the earth firm, not to be moved, He rules the peoples with justice.

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, the sea thunder with all its waves:

Let the fields be glad, and all their creatures, all the trees of the wood shout for joy

Before the Lord, for He comes, for He comes to rule the earth:

He will judge the world with justice, and the peoples with His truth.

Antiphon repeated (all). All the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord, for He comes.

Lesson from the Prophet Ezechiel, 17:22-24 (leader).

Thus said the Lord God: I Myself will take the top of the high cedar, and will set it: I will crop off a tender twig from the top of the branches thereof, and I will plant it on a mountain high and eminent. On the high mountains of Israel will I plant it and it shall shoot forth into branches, and shall bear fruit, and it shall become a great cedar: and all the birds shall dwell under it, and every fowl shall make its nest under the shadow of the branches thereof, and all the trees of the country shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree: and have dried up the green tree, and have caused the dry tree to flourish. I the Lord have spoken and have done it. All. Thanks be to God.

Feasts & Solemnities During Advent

FEAST OF ST. BARBARA—4 DECEMBER

Locked away by her father for her protection, St. Barbara secretly became a Christian and chose a life of consecrated virginity. She is the patron saint of armorers, artillerymen, architects, mathematicians and miners

FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS—6 DECEMBER

One of the most famous saints, St. Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra and was wealthy from an inheritance. He would secretly give his money to the poor. He is the patron saint of bakers and pawnbrokers.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION—8 DECEMBER

One of the Greater Marian Feast days, this is the day the Church celebrates the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Catholics are obligated to attend Mass on this very special day of Our Lady where we recognize that she was conceived without sin.

It is a Holy Day of Obligation. Masses are at 12 Noon & 6:30 pm.

FEAST OF ST. JUAN DIEGO—9 DECEMBER

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to St. Juan Diego and imprinted her image on his tilma to deliver a message to the Bishop of Mexico. He is the patron saint of indigenous peoples.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADELUPE—12 DECEMBER

This particular apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary bears the title of Patroness of the Americas. She appeared to St. Juan Diego Within six years of this apparition, six million Aztecs had converted to Catholicism. The tilma shows Mary as the God-bearer - she is pregnant with her Divine Son.

FEAST OF ST. LUCY—13 DECEMBER

Much of the history has been lost on St. Lucy, but it is known that she lived in Syracuse and died during the persecution of Christians in the early fourth century. She is the patron saint of the blind.



Immaculate Conception
December 8th



Saint Juan Diego
December 9th



Our Lady of Guadalupe
December 12th



Saint Lucy
December 13th