

### ABOUT ADVENT WREATHS

Traditionally, Advent wreaths are constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which four candles are inserted, representing the four weeks of Advent. Ideally, three candles are purple and one is rose, but white candles can also be used.

The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas.

The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of his second coming to judge the living and the dead.

### BLESSING OF AN 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.

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#### 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.

Then the Scripture, **Isaiah 9:** (lines 1-2)

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.

**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.*