



Preparing for Life at the Table of the Lord

A Newsletter from the Christian Initiation Committee
of the Ontario Liturgical Conference

Advent 2019

The Advent Christmas Season

Advent may be the one time of year that we feel the most out of sync with our surroundings and culture. Our world is busy planning and celebrating Christmas parties and as a new liturgical year begins we are entering a season of joyful expectation.

Expectation or anticipation is not something our culture embraces. We seek to have needs met quickly and the notion of waiting is almost lost. Often when forced to wait in line at the local store or doctor's office we turn our attention to an electronic device.

For catechumens and candidates, it may be challenging to hear the Scriptures and prayers of Advent when for years their pattern has been to focus on Christmas from about December 1st until December 26th.

Celebrating the Advent season can provide opportunities to practice welcoming Christ in our brothers and sisters as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation.

This season is an ideal time for sponsors to walk closely with the catechumens and candidates. The role of the sponsor is to accompany and serve as a mentor.

Advent provides the space and time for a sponsor to invite the catechumen or candidate to join them in an act of charity or outreach. The sponsor is

encouraged to pray with the catechumen or candidate prior to the activity and to include time after the event to reflect together on the time spent serving God by serving others.

Many parishes hold special events during Advent such as Lessons and Carols or an evening reflection. Sponsors may invite and accompany the catechumen or candidate to a parish event. This is a practical way to introduce them to the larger parish community.

One of the most effective ways to celebrate Advent well is to deliberately schedule Christmas gatherings during the Christmas season. This year the feast of Christmas ends at sundown on Sunday January 12th.

During the Christmas break we continue to gather with catechumens and candidates for breaking open the Word each Sunday. The feast of the Holy Family and Epiphany are opportunities to celebrate the Christmas season with the catechumens, candidates and their families.

Lamenting a culture that surrenders Advent to Christmas festivities will not lead us to embracing the Advent season. Celebrating Advent well and scheduling times to celebrate Christmas during the Christmas season will assist us in living in harmony with the liturgical year.

The Ontario Liturgical Conference is a consultative body to the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario in liturgical matters. The Christian Initiation Committee supports the OLC in matters pertaining to the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and other issues of Christian Initiation in Ontario, Canada. One of the primary goals of the Christian Initiation Committee is to promote the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* as it applies to adults, children of catechetical age and those baptized in infancy. **Email:** olcrcia@gmail.com