

ADVENT *Happy New Year!*

The Church celebrates its new year on the 1st Sunday of Advent, 27th November 2011. The Advent Season happens here at a time of dark, winter days, during which we prepare for the coming

(Latin - *adventus*

)

into the world of He "who is the light of the world".

In the season of Advent, we await the coming of Christ. We enter into the mystery of the Incarnation - the event wherein the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, took human form. The Incarnation transcends time: it is an historical event *in the past* - as a newborn in the stable; *in the present* -

Jesus comes to us at Christmas again, spiritually, as grace to our souls; and

in the future

- at His second coming, of which we are reminded at the Mass.

Advent is a time of preparation and expectation at the material level - shopping and posting, cleaning and decorations. But, primarily it is a time of spiritual preparation and expectation - confession and preparation of our souls (cleansing), alms-giving and fasting, visiting the crib and Blessed Sacrament, participating weekly and daily in the Advent Liturgy of preparation and expectation, prayer and the placement of the crib in our own homes. The problem arises when we lose touch with what is central to Advent and Christmas. Secularism and consumerism can easily encroach on the reality of Christmas. We need to be proactive in preserving the proper focus within our families and church community.

Focus on the Liturgy



There are always four Sundays in Advent. The [liturgical colour](#) of the season is violet or purple, except on the Third Sunday of Advent, called *Gaudete* or Rejoice Sunday, when joyful vestments may be worn. There is an 'Alleluia' in the liturgies, but no 'Gloria'.

Advent is a time when the Church opens up the glorious writings of one of the greatest of the Jewish prophets of the Old Testament - Isaiah. He wrote several hundred years before Christ, foretelling in some detail the coming of the Messiah; during the daily Mass liturgies of Advent, week after week, we meet the people who were prepared and chosen by God to make the Incarnation possible: the prophets of old, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, Sts. Elizabeth and Zechariah, Simeon, Anna and many others.

So it is in our own lives . .

[Christmas](#) - [Liturgical Year](#)