



KNOW & GROW TOPIC OF THE WEEK: ADVENT EXPLAINED, PART 1

The Definition of Advent: The word “advent” (the arrival of an important person or thing) is derived from the Latin word “adventus,” which means “coming.”

1. What Is the Purpose of Advent? Advent is a season on the Church's liturgical calendar and according to the *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; and as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation [Norms 39]. We tend to think of Advent only as the season in which we prepare for Christmas or the First Coming of Christ, but as the General Norms point out, it is important that we also remember it as a celebration in which we look forward to the Second Coming of Christ. Properly speaking, Advent is a season that brings to mind the Two Comings of Christ.



2. What Liturgical Colors Are Used in Advent? Particular days and certain types of celebrations can have their own colors (e.g., red for martyrs, black or white at funerals), but the normal color for Advent is violet. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* provides: The color violet or purple is used in Advent and Lent. It may also be worn in Offices and Masses for the Dead [346d]. In many places, there is a notable exception for the Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday: The color rose may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent) [GIRM 346f].

3. Is Advent a Penitential Season? We often think of Advent as a penitential season because the liturgical color for Advent is violet, like the color of Lent, which is a penitential season. However, in reality, Advent is not a penitential season. Surprise! According to the Code of Canon Law: Can. 1250 The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent. Although local authorities can establish additional penitential days, this is a complete listing of the penitential days and times of the Latin Church as a whole, and Advent is not one of them.

4. When Does Advent Begin and End? According to the General Norms: Advent begins with evening prayer I of the Sunday falling on or closest to 30 November and ends before evening prayer I of Christmas [Norms 40]. The Sunday on or closest to November 30 can range between November 27 and December 3, depending on the year.

5. What Is the Role of Sundays in Advent? There are four Sundays of Advent. The General Norms state: The Sundays of this season are named the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Sundays of Advent [Norms 41]. We have already mentioned that the Third Sunday of Advent has a special name--Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for "Rejoice," which is the first word of the introit of the Mass for this day. The Church ascribes particular importance to these Sundays, and they take precedence over other liturgical celebrations. Thus the General Norms state: Because of its special importance, the Sunday celebration gives way only to solemnities or feasts of the Lord. The Sundays of the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Easter, however, take precedence over all solemnities and feasts of the Lord. Solemnities occurring on these Sundays are observed on the Saturdays preceding [Norms 5]. You also cannot celebrate Funeral Masses on the Sundays of Advent; among the Masses for the Dead, the Funeral Mass holds first place. It may be celebrated on any day except for Solemnities that are Holydays of Obligation, Thursday of Holy Week, the Paschal Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, with due regard also for all the other requirements of the norm of the law [GIRM 380].