



ALL ABOUT ADVENT

THE REAL MEANING OF THE SEASON

WHAT IS ADVENT?

The season of Advent is a time of expectation when we prepare our homes and our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. The word Advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming”.

Advent is a season of hope, a time to nurture peace and experience joy in anticipation for the love that is made incarnate with the birth of Jesus.

Keep this purpose ever in mind as you make your plans to prepare for Christmas. Everything will make sense or become senseless in relation to this purpose. If baking cookies helps you achieve this purpose, bake away. Sitting quietly on a park bench, taking long walks in quiet places, visiting your church each day, reading, singing, serving others...whatever it is that helps you achieve the purpose of Advent, give yourself to those activities.

Wake up each day with this purpose in your heart and on your mind. Purpose has a way of transforming the way we live our lives. Allow the purpose of Advent to transform you.

WHEN DOES ADVENT BEGIN?

This year, Advent begins on Sunday, December 1, 2024. The first day of Advent marks the beginning of the Catholic Church’s liturgical calendar year.

ADVENT NOVENA

One special way to celebrate Advent and prepare for Christmas is to say a novena, especially to a saint like Saint Andrew or Saint Nicholas. A novena is a nine-day prayer that you typically say to a specific saint for a special intention. Some novenas are said in one day, or over nine months, but typically you repeat them over nine consecutive days. Some people add on extra practices like fasting or acts of service to deepen their novena experience!

THE ADVENT FAST

There is great wisdom in the Christian practice of fasting—even though its benefits are largely forgotten. Fasting is a spiritual exercise, and as such is primarily an action of the inner life. Authentic fasting draws us nearer to God and opens our hearts to receive his many gifts.

Even though it’s not as common, there is an old Catholic tradition of fasting during Advent. Why? To get your heart ready for the arrival of Jesus.

ADVENT FEAST DAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

We become what (and who) we celebrate. If there’s one thing Catholics love, it’s to celebrate. We celebrate all that God has done for us, we celebrate different spiritual milestones, and we celebrate saints! During Advent, there’s no exception.



As we approach the season of gratitude and generosity, I invite you to join us in celebrating **Giving Tuesday** on **December 3, 2024**. This global day of giving is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the blessings in our lives and to give back to those who nurture our hearts and spirits.

Your parish plays an essential role in your community—providing support to families, offering outreach to those in need, and sharing the message of faith, hope, and Christ's love. Your support allows them to continue this important mission and make a lasting impact on the lives of so many.

Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. Your generosity can help:

- Strengthen ministries that guide our youth, families, and elderly.
- Expand outreach efforts to serve those struggling in our community.
- Maintain your parish as a welcoming place for worship and spiritual growth.

This Giving Tuesday, please consider making a gift to your parish through the Catholic Sharing Appeal. Together, we can ensure our parishes and missions continue to thrive as a beacon of God's love.

To make your gift, visit dwc.org/CSA or you can send a check (payable to CSA) to Catholic Sharing Appeal, PO Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003. Be sure to include your parish name in the memo line!

Thank you for your continued prayers and generosity.

Blessings,
Heidi Sforza
Director of Annual Giving
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston