

## **Blessing of an Advent Wreath**



Advent is the season of expectation of the Christ, and it is somewhat penitential in tone. It is four weeks long, or slightly less, the first two focusing on Jesus' final coming as Lord and Judge. The third Sunday of Advent, traditionally named *Gaudete* Sunday, expresses a joyful note of anticipation and hope-filled longing. The final eight days anticipate his coming in history (Christ-mas). Since the tenth century, the first Sunday of Advent has marked the beginning of the Church year (liturgical year).

The Advent wreath, which marks the four weeks of preparation for Christmas, is made of four candles and a circle of branches. Before the first candle is lighted, the household gathers for a blessing such as this.

*All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:*  
**Our help is in the name of the Lord.**

*All respond:*  
**Who made heaven and earth.**

*The leader then introduces the blessing:*  
**In the short days and long nights of Advent, we realize how we are always waiting for deliverance, always needing salvation by God. Around this wreath, we shall remember God's promise.**

*Then the Scripture is read:*  
**Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:**

**"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; --Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing." The Word of the Lord.**

*All respond:*  
**Thanks be to God.**

*After a short period of silence, all join in the Lord's Prayer. Then the leader invites:*  
**Let us now pray for God's blessing upon this wreath.**

**Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of all 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. Amen.**

*Then the first candle is lighted. The leader follows, by saying:*  
**Let us bless the Lord.**

*All respond, making the sign of the cross as they do so:*  
**And give him thanks.**