

ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF AN ADVENT WREATH

First Sunday of Advent

I509 The use of the Advent Wreath is a traditional practice which has found its place in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent. The blessing may be celebrated during Mass, a celebration of the word of God, or Evening Prayer.

I510 Customarily the Advent Wreath is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which are inserted four candles. According to tradition, three of the candles are violet and the fourth is rose. However, four violet or white candles may be used.

I511 The candles represent the four weeks of Advent and the number of candles lighted each week corresponds to the number of the current week of Advent. The rose candle is lighted on the Third Sunday of Advent, also known as Gaudete Sunday.

I512 If the Advent Wreath is to be used in church, it should be of sufficient size to be visible to the congregation. It may be suspended from the ceiling or placed on a stand. If it is placed in the presbyterium, it should not interfere with the celebration of the liturgy, nor should it obscure the altar, lectern, or chair.

I513 When the Advent Wreath is used in church, on the Second and succeeding Sundays of Advent the candles are lighted either before Mass begins or immediately before the opening prayer; no additional rites or prayers are used.

I514 When the blessing of the Advent Wreath is celebrated in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another member of the family; the shorter rite may appropriately be used for this purpose.

I515 When the Advent Wreath is used in the home, the opening prayer of the Sunday Mass is recited when the candles are lighted. The lighting of the candles may be preceded or followed by an Advent hymn and a Scripture reading. The lighting of the Advent Wreath may fittingly be included as a part of the evening meal.

I516 The Advent Wreath may be blessed by a priest, deacon, or a lay minister.

I. ORDER OF BLESSING WITHIN MASS

1517 After the gospel reading, the celebrant in the homily, based on the sacred text and pertinent to the particular place and the people involved, explains the meaning of the celebration.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

1518 The general intercessions follow, either in the form usual at Mass or in the form provided here. The celebrant concludes the intercessions with the prayer of blessing. From the following intentions those best for the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The celebrant says:

Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again. Let us pray that we may be always ready to welcome him.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Or:

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Assisting minister:

That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of Jesus, we pray to the Lord. R.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

1519 With hands outstretched, the celebrant says the prayer of blessing:

Lord God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.

Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

1520 Or:

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

R. Amen.

The first candle is then lighted.

II. ORDER OF BLESSING WITHIN A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

1521 The present order may be used by a priest or a deacon, and also by a layperson, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

I 522 When the community has gathered, the minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

Amen.

I 523 A minister who is a priest or deacon greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

May God, who enlightens every heart, be with you.

And all reply:

And also with you.

I 524 A lay minister greets those present in the following words:

Let us praise God, who enlightens every heart, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

I 525 In the following or similar words, the minister prepares those present for the blessing.

My brothers and sisters, today we begin the season of Advent. We open our hearts to God's love as we prepare to welcome Christ into our lives and homes. The candles of this wreath remind us that Jesus Christ came to conquer the darkness of sin and to lead us into the light of his glorious kingdom.

READING OF THE WORD

I 526 A reader, another person present, or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture.

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah: 9:1-2, 5-6
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**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,
As they rejoice before you as at the harvest,
as men make merry when dividing spoils.
For a child is born to us, a son is given us;
upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.
His dominion is vast
and forever peaceful,
From David's throne, and over his kingdom,
which he confirms and sustains
By judgment and justice,
both now and forever.**

1527 Or:

Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7—You, Lord, are our redeemer.

Jeremiah 33:14-16—I will cause a good seed to spring forth from David.

1 John 1:5-7—God is light; walk in the light.

Matthew 1:18-25—The birth of Jesus.

1528 As circumstances suggest, one of the following responsorial psalms may be sung, or some other suitable song.

R. Lord, make us turn to you, and we shall be saved.

Psalm 80

**O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
O guide of the flock of Joseph!
From your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. **R.****

Once again, O LORD of hosts,

**look down from heaven, and see;
Take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted,
the son of man whom you yourself made strong. R.**

**May your help be with the man of your right hand,
with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name. R.**

Psalm 8:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8-9

R. (v. 2) O Lord, our Lord, how great is your name over all the earth.

I529 As circumstances suggest, the minister may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

INTERCESSIONS

I530 The intercessions are then said. The minister introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The minister says:

Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again. Let us pray that we may be always ready to welcome him.

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Assisting minister:

That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ, we pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of Jesus, we pray to the Lord. R.

1531 After the intercessions the minister, in the following or similar words, invites all present to sing or say the Lord's Prayer.

With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, let us offer our prayer to the Father:

All:

Our Father . . .

PRAYER OF BLESSING

1532 A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.

Lord God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.

Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

1533 Or:

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

R. Amen.

The first candle is lighted.

CONCLUDING RITE

I 534 A minister who is a priest or deacon concludes the rite by saying:

**May the light of Christ lead you to the joy of his kingdom, now and for ever.
R. Amen.**

Then he blesses all present.

And may almighty God bless you all, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

I 535 A lay minister concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the light of Christ lead us to the joy of his kingdom, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

I 536 It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

III. SHORTER RITE

I 537 All make the sign of cross as the minister says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

I 538 One of those present or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah: 9:1-2, 5-6

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**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,
As they rejoice before you as at the harvest,
as men make merry when dividing spoils.
For a child is born to us, a son is given us;
upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.
His dominion is vast
and forever peaceful,
From David's throne, and over his kingdom,
which he confirms and sustains
By judgment and justice,
both now and forever.**

I 539 A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.

**Lord God,
your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior,
who enlightens our hearts
and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.**

**Pour forth your blessings upon us
as we light the candles of this wreath;
may their light reflect the splendor of Christ,
who is Lord, for ever and ever.**

R. Amen.

1540 Or:

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

R. Amen.