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# ADVENT

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Commission For Liturgy | Archdiocese of Bombay

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## Advent begins

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with Evening Prayer I of the Sunday falling on or the Sunday closest to 30 November and ends before Evening Prayer I of Christmas. The weekdays from 17 December to 24 December inclusive serve to prepare more directly for the Lord's birth.

## Office of Readings, Wednesday, Advent week 1

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At the beginning of the Advent season, in the Office of Readings, Wednesday, Advent week 1 St. Bernard teaches us that between Christ's two comings, one in history and at the other at the end of time, there is an invisible coming here and now.

## Excerpts from Prayers during the Advent Season:

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... the resolve to run forth and meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming

*Opening Collect Prayer, 1st Sunday of Advent, Roman Missal (RM)*

Advent is the season that prepares the Christian people to receive the graces that will be given in the celebration of the great solemnity of Christmas. Advent has a twofold character: as a time to prepare for the solemnity of Christmas when the Son of God's first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. The first part of Advent season urges us to prepare for Christmas by encouraging us not only to look backward in time to our Lord's first coming, but also to look forward to his coming again in glory and majesty, to a day when all is at last made manifest. Adapted from Preface I of Advent. The season of Advent is a period for devout and joyful expectation.

Each Gospel reading on the Sundays in Advent has a distinctive theme: On the First Sunday of Advent the Lord's coming at the end of time. On the Second Sunday of Advent the readings are of John the Baptist who prepares the way. On the Third Sunday of Advent the readings are of John the Baptist, the one who is coming is greater. The Fourth Sunday of Advent the events that prepare the Church immediately for the Lord's birth. The Old Testament readings are prophecies about the Messiah and the Messianic age, especially from the Book of Isaiah. The readings from an Apostle contain exhortations and proclamations, in keeping with the different themes of Advent. (Adapted from OLM 93).

Advent is a time of waiting, conversion and of hope: We wait remembering the first humble coming of the Lord in our world; We are also awaiting with prayer and supplication for his final, glorious coming as Lord of History and Judge. The Liturgy at this time invites us to

...may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son

*Opening Collect Prayer, 2nd  
Sunday of Advent (RM)*

...faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity...

*Opening Collect Prayer, 3rd  
Sunday of Advent (RM)*

... to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel...

*Opening Collect Prayer, 4th  
Sunday of Advent, (RM)*

...we who watch for the day, may inherit the great promise in which we now dare to hope

*Preface I of Advent (RM)*

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him,

the Virgin Mother longed for him

with love beyond all telling,

John the Baptist sang of his coming

and proclaimed his presence when he came

It is by his gift that we already rejoice

at the mystery of his Nativity

so that he may find us in watchful prayer

and exultant in his praise.

*Preface II of Advent (RM)*

reflect on our own lives and prepare for both Christ's comings. We celebrate the joyful hope that God's plan of Salvation is already accomplished by Christ. We live as the pilgrim Church in the interim period between Christ's incarnation and His return in glory.

### *First Sunday of Advent - (Be ready, alert, stay awake, be on guard)*

The Gospel text of the first Sunday of Advent in all the three years announces the sudden coming of the Son of Man in glory on a day and at an hour unknown to us. We are urged to stay awake, alert, vigilant and not to be caught unawares but be on our guard.

The prophet Isaiah (Year A) and Jeremiah (Year C) announce that "the days are coming." This points to the final times; but they also point as well to the coming solemnity of Christmas. The first reading from the prophet Isaiah in Year B takes the form of a prayer that is proper to the Season by instructing the Church in penitential attitudes.

### *Second Sunday Of Advent - (An increased awareness of His coming)*

St. John the Baptist dominates the Gospels of all the three-Year cycles on the Second and Third Sundays of Advent. John, who preceded Jesus' in his earthly coming, still precedes Jesus' coming to us today. As in Jesus time he helped prepare the people of Israel to receive Christ he continues to prepare the Church to receive Jesus. John continues to urge us to repent. In Year C, the prophet Baruch invites us to prepare ourselves and calls for conversion. In Year B, the prophet Isaiah says "A voice cries out in the desert prepare the way of the Lord".

### *Third Sunday Of Advent - (One is coming who is greater)*

The Third Sunday of Advent shows the relation of John to Jesus. On the Third Sunday of Advent the celebrant vestments are a joyful rose colour. This Sunday gets its name from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: *Gaudete* – Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. As the spirit of Christ's anticipation grows as we prepare for Christmas - Indeed, the Lord is near. He has come in history and He will come again in glory. He comes now in each Eucharist celebrated and "Indeed, the Lord is near."

## *Fourth Sunday of Advent - (Messianic Manifestation)*

As we approach the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas is very near. We now shift from conversion to the events that surround the birth of Jesus. All the readings from the prophets, the Apostles and the Gospels centre around the mystery announced to Mary by the angel Gabriel.

The first reading in Year B, from 2 Samuel invites us to see the fulfilment of scripture through the history of the dynasty of David. As we read through the centuries of Israel's history, we see at the end of it the angel standing before Mary. In Year A, the same mystery of Mary's virginal conception is told from Joseph's perspective. This is recounted in Matthew's Gospel. The first reading and the Gospel interconnect so well that all prophecy and all history ultimately speak of the Coming of the Son of Man in the flesh i.e. the dual truth that Jesus is the Son of David and that he is Son of God and Mary and Joseph play a role in accomplishing this mystery.

In Year C the Gospel text tells us what Mary did immediately after the encounter with the angel. In the final days of Advent as the assembly enters into the eucharistic mystery the Prayer over the Offerings is, "May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Through the Eucharist prayer, we are invited like Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to "hasten" to do good to others. Our good deeds will surprise others with the presence of Christ and cause something within them to leap for joy.

### **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

<b>Year A</b>	<b>Year B</b>	<b>Year C</b>
<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>
Is 2:1-5 The Lord gathers all nations into the eternal peace of the kingdom of God.	Is 63:16-17;64:1,3b-8 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down.	Jer 33:14-16 I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David.
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>
Ps 122:1-2,4-5,6-7,8-9 We shall go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.	Ps 80:2ac &3b,15-16,18-19 O God, bring us back; let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved.	Ps 25:4-5ab,8-9,10 &14 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>
Rom 13:11-14a Salvation is near to us now.	1 Cor 1:3-9 We wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.	1 Thess 3:12-4:2 May the Lord establish your hearts at the coming of our Lord Jesus.
<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Matt 24:37-44 Therefore, stay awake, you must be ready.	Mark 13:33-37 Stay awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come.	Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 Your redemption is drawing near.

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>
Is 11:1-10 With righteousness he shall judge the poor.	Is 40:1-5, 9-11 Prepare the way for the Lord.	Bar 5:1-9 God will show your splendour.
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>
Ps 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17 In his days shall justice flourish, and greater peace forever.	Ps 85:9ab &10, 11-12,13-14 Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and grant us your salvation.	Ps 126:1-2ab, 2cd-3,4-5,6 What great deeds the Lord worked for us! Indeed, we were glad.
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>
Rom 15:4-9 Christ saves all men.	2 Pet 3:8-14 We are waiting for a new heaven and a new earth	Phil 1:4-6, 8-11 Be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.
<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Matt 3:1-12 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.	Mark 1:1-8 Make straight the paths of the Lord.	Luke 3:1-6 All flesh shall see the salvation of God.

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>
Is 35:1-6a, 10 God himself will come and save you	Is 61:1-2a, 10-11 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord	Zeph 3:14-18a The Lord will exult over you with loud singing.
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>
Ps 146:7,8-9a,9bc-10 Come, Lord, and save us or Alleluia!	Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54 My soul shall exult in my God.	Is 12:2-3, 4bcde, 5-6 Shout, and sing for joy, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>
Jas 5:7-10 Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand.	1 Thess 5:16-24 May your spirit & soul and body be kept sound & blameless.	Phil 4:4-7 The Lord is at hand.
<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Matt 11:2-11 Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?	John 1:6-8, 19-28 Among you stands one you do not know.	Luke 3:10-18 What then shall we do?

<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>		
<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>First Reading</b>
Is 7:10-14 Behold, the virgin shall conceive.	2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 The kingdom of David shall be made sure forever before the Lord.	Mic 5:1-5a From you shall come forth one who is to be ruler over Israel.
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>
Ps 24:1-2,3-4ab,5-6 Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.	Ps 89:2-3,4-5,27&29 I will sing forever of your mercies, O Lord.	Ps 80:2ac & 3b, 15-16,18-19 O God, bring us back; let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>
Rom 1:1-7 Jesus Christ, descended from David, is the Son of God.	Rom 16:25-27 The mystery which was kept secret for long ages is made known.	Heb 10:5-10 Behold, I have come to do your will.
<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Matt 1:18-24 Jesus was born of Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, son of David.	Luke 1:26-38 Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son.	Luke 1:39-45 Why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

### *Season of Advent Pastoral Notes*

This twofold character is reflected in the two stages of Advent, each with its own special focus expressed in the corresponding preface of the Eucharistic Prayer. From the First Sunday of Advent to 16 December, the liturgy expresses the eschatological expectation of Advent, the watchfulness of God's people looking forward to the time when Christ will come again in glory and majesty, and "the salvation promised us will be ours." From 17 December until Christmas eve, the texts proper to each day prepare us more directly to celebrate the Lord's birth, "our hearts filled with wonder and praise."

Advent is not simply a preparation to commemorate the historical event of Christmas nor primarily an expectation of the parousia, but is rather an anticipation or a beginning of the celebration of the integral mystery of the incarnation, the advent and the epiphany of the Son of God in flesh and in majesty. The Christian community lives in an "interim" time between two historical events: the coming of Christ in the flesh and his coming in glory at the end of time. The Church is called to be strong in faith "as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The use of violet in Advent suggests a state of unfulfilled readiness and should no longer be regarded as an expression of penitence. It serves to set off the joyful white of Christmas with greater dramatic effect.

For the same reason, music in Advent may be more restrained, for example, in the use of the organ and other instruments. The Gloria is not used on the Sundays of Advent, not because it is a penitential

season, but so that the Gloria, the hymn of the angels may resound with greater freshness on Christmas night.

Popular devotions should respect the nature and character of Advent and should be consistent with the themes presented in the Lectionary for Mass and the Missal. The anticipation of the Christmas feast should be avoided. Songs, carols, and devotions which focus on the nativity itself are out of place in Advent, especially before 17 December.

Where they are the custom, the Advent wreath and the Jesse tree, which help to sustain an expectant orientation toward Christmas, can assist the liturgical celebration and may be associated with the celebration of Mass. The wreath can be blessed on the First Sunday of Advent. At subsequent celebrations the candles are lit either before Mass begins or immediately before the Collect (*Opening Prayer*); no additional rites or prayers are used.

The Season of Christmas can be made very colourful if we take a cue from the Bible itself. In Ex 28:5 “...they shall use gold, blue, purple, and crimson yams”. Gold signifies wealth, Christ the Sun of Righteousness, King of Kings etc...; Blue signifies hopeful expectation. What was impossible was made possible by the incarnation of Christ. It reveals the goodness of Christ. The vast expanse of the sky, ocean resembling the expanse of God’s love. Purple, a colour of royalty and power. It also reminds us of repentance and suffering. Crimson signifies divine love, blood of martyrs and the Holy Spirit. Rose the colour we see at dawn signifies the arrival of the sun - Son of God used on *Gaudete* Sunday. White signifies Christ the Light and green represents evergreens i.e. the hope of spring.

It would also be good to know the key Biblical figures that appear in the liturgical text of Advent. A study of the leitmotif dynamic could be made on Isaiah (longing), John the Baptist (recognizing) and Mary (Incarnation).

Vigils, services of light, the ‘O Antiphons’ from 17 to 23 December and celebrations of reconciliation may be very effective in fostering a sense of watchfulness and prayer and in disposing the community to a more fruitful participation in the Masses of Advent.