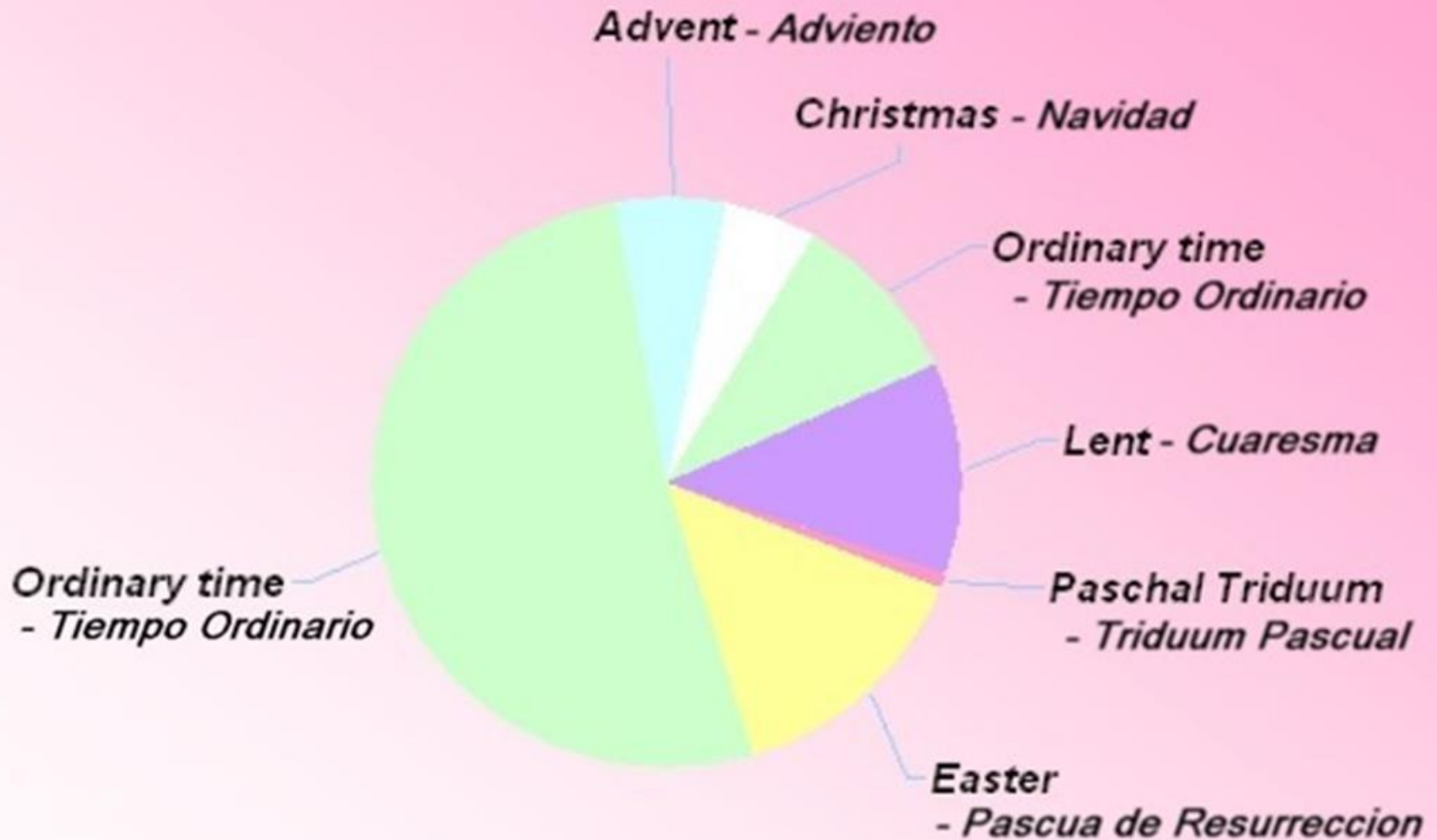




- 1.) What Is Advent?
- 2.) Meaning of the Four Weeks, and Questions.
- 3.) History of Advent.
- 4.) What Are the Colors of Advent and what do they symbolize?
- 5.) Advent Traditions.
- 6.) Central to Advent is Mary's "Yes" to God's plan of Salvation: Jesus (Luke 1: 26-38).
- 7.) Let's Get Real this Advent: A Checklist

Liturgical Year - Año Liturgico



**Advent & CHRISTmas = “the coming” of Jesus
“The Reason for the Season”**

(Play Video 1)

What Is Advent?

- Advent is a time of **expectant waiting and preparation** for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. Celebrating Advent involves spending time in **spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ** at Christmas. In the Catholic Church, the season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24 (duration is from 21 to 28 days).

- The term is an anglicized version of the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming" from the Latin *adventus*, which is the translation of the Greek word *parousia*, commonly used to refer to the Second Coming of Christ.

- For Catholic Christians, the season of Advent anticipate the coming of Christ from two different perspectives.

The season offers the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah, and to be alert for his Second Coming.

- Celebrating Advent typically involves a season of **prayer**, **fasting** and **repentance**, followed by anticipation, hope and joy.

- We celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to Earth (**His Incarnation**), but also for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of time.



Meaning of the Four Weeks of Advent

(With Advent Dates for 2015)

- November 29 - First Sunday of Advent –

The Theme is **HOPE** – It is the hope that shatters the darkness. The hope of Salvation in Jesus Christ, true light of the world.

- December 6 - Second Sunday of Advent -

The Theme is **PEACE** – The thru the deep and unending peace that comes only with the presence of Christ in our world and in our lives,

- December 13 - Third Sunday of Advent - The Theme is **JOY** - The third Sunday of Advent is called "Gaudete" Sunday (coming from the first word of the Latin Entrance Antiphon for this day, meaning "Rejoice") and the liturgical color may be rose instead of purple. This is the Church's way of further heightening our expectation as we draw ever nearer the Solemnity of Christmas. It is the joy we feel as we approach the birth of our Savior and remember the awesome beauty of what happened on that cold Bethlehem night. It is a joy that cannot be bought or obtained from artificial highs. It is a joy that comes from our living faith in a living God.

- December 20 - Fourth Sunday of Advent – The Theme is **LOVE** - The absolute love of God for us manifested fully in the Incarnation and birth of Christ, which is quickly coming to the world to save it December 24th.



History of Advent

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, Advent began sometime after the 4th century as a time of preparation for Epiphany, and not in anticipation of Christmas. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Christ by remembering the visit of the wise men and, in some traditions, the Baptism of Jesus. At this time new Christians were baptized and received into the faith, and so the early church instituted a 40-day period of fasting and repentance.



Later, in the 6th century, St. Gregory the Great was the first to associate this

season of Advent with the coming of Christ. Originally it was not the coming of the Christ-child that was anticipated, but rather, the Second Coming of Christ.

By the Middle Ages, the church had extended the celebration of Advent to include the coming of Christ through his birth in Bethlehem, his future coming at the end of time, and his presence among us through the promised Holy Spirit.

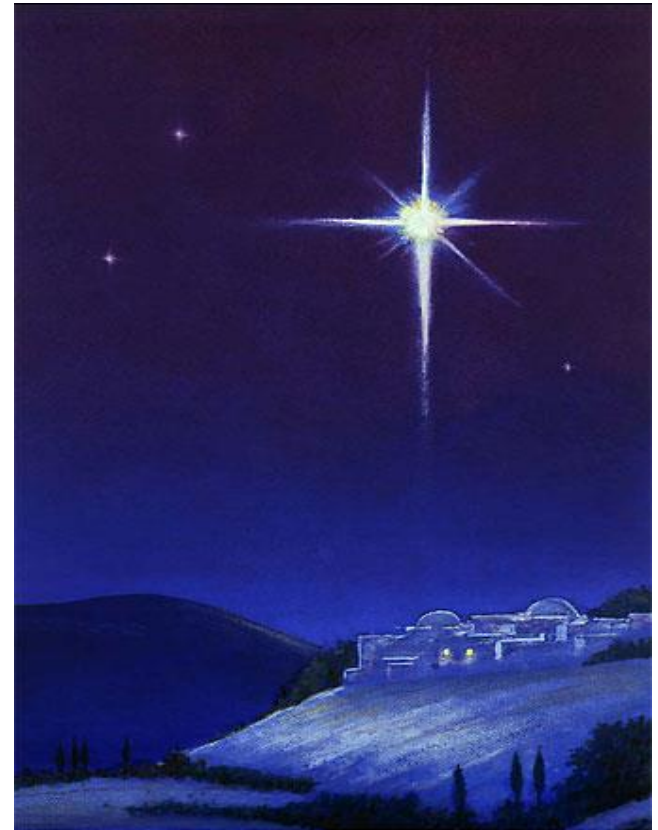
Modern-day Advent services include symbolic customs related to all three of these "advents" of Christ. Since the 900s Advent has been considered the beginning of the Church year. This does not mean that Advent is the most important time of the year. Easter has always had this honor.

What Are the Colors of Advent and what do they symbolize?

Purple has traditionally been the primary color of Advent, symbolizing repentance and fasting. Purple is also the color of royalty, demonstrating the anticipation and reception of the coming King celebrated during Advent. Today, however, many churches have begun to use blue instead of purple, as a means of distinguishing Advent from Lent.

Pink (or rose) is also one of the colors of Advent used during the third Sunday. It represents joy or rejoicing and reveals a shift in the season away from repentance and toward celebration.

White is the color of the center Advent candle, representing purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Savior. Also, those who receive Christ as Savior are washed of their sins and made whiter than snow.



Advent Traditions:

The Advent Wreath Advent Wreath

"Customarily the Advent Wreath is constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which are inserted four candles (advent candles). The Advent Wreath represents the long time when people lived in spiritual darkness, waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Light of the world. Each year in Advent people wait once again in darkness for the coming of the Lord, His historical coming in the mystery of Bethlehem, His final coming at the end of time, and His special coming in every moment of grace.



Nativity Scene or "crèche"

"The tradition of having a nativity scene or "crèche" was made popular by St. Francis of Assisi. It is a reproduction of the cave in Bethlehem with Mary, Joseph, the infant Jesus in a manger, shepherds, angels, and animals.



Posadas

Posadas, a word that means "shelter" or "lodging," is an Advent custom in Mexico. It re-enacts Mary and Joseph's search for lodging as they traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. People go from house to house seeking lodging, but the "innkeepers" refuse to let them stay. On Christmas Eve, the travelers are finally welcomed at the last house where they celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Welcome St. Nicholas

The true story of Santa Claus begins when Nicholas' wealthy parents died in an epidemic while he was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you have and give to [the] poor" (Matthew 19:21), Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need.





Central to Advent is Mary's "Yes" to God's plan of Salvation: Jesus

The Gospel according to Luke (Luke 1: 26-38)

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived* a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.



QUESTIONS

- 1.) What should I do as a person to begin the Advent Season living an atmosphere of harmony and love?**
- 2.) What better way to prepare for Advent now that by seeking reconciliation with God. I am in need and am I ready to go to seek this reconciliation?**
- 3.) What better way to prepare for Advent now than by seeking reconciliation with God. I am in need and ready to go to this reconciliation?**
- 4.) What we to do as an individual to properly welcome Jesus in our lives and to our family?**

Video #2

Let's Get Real this Advent: A Checklist:

- Set aside time for silence and prayer.
- Light a candle before dinner each night and reflect on the season.
- Make an effort to spend more time with loved ones, in person or on the phone.

ADVENT RESOURCES ON-LINE:

* **The Definitive Guide to Advent and Christmas** at:

www.osv.com/MyFaith/ChurchSeasonsandFeasts/Advent/Article/TabId/826/ArtMID/13771/ArticleID/11237/The-Definitive-Guide-to-Advent-and-Christmas.aspx

* **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on Advent & Advent Resources** at: <http://usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/index.cfm>

* Read Thomas Craughwell's article "**The Real St. Nicholas**" and find out how Santa and St. Nicholas became ... confused at:

<https://www.osv.com/MyFaith/ChurchSeasonsandFeasts/Christmas/Article/TabId/829/ArtMID/13770/ArticleID/11246/The-Real-St-Nicholas.aspx>