

*How is this Advent different?*

The Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, (CCC) tells us Advent is the liturgical season of four weeks devoted to preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

Advent this year is special in several ways. It is very different because it's the only Advent available to us at this time. It is also quite different from last year because it is one whole year closer to the second coming of Jesus. It is also the first Advent of the rest of our lives. For some of us it will be the last.

The Catechism (CCC 522) says, the coming of God's son to live among us is of such immense importance that God willed to prepare for it over centuries.

Our Church calls us to celebrate Advent at several levels:

1. Advent makes present the ancient expectancy of the promised Messiah.
2. Advent begins a new liturgical year.
3. During Advent we experience the expectancy of the second coming of Jesus.
4. During Advent we prepare to have Christmas happen in our hearts.
5. As Jesus grew in the womb of Mary, We grow in the womb of Holy Mother Church. We prepare to be reborn with Jesus to new life at Christmas.
6. We identify with John the Baptist to make way for the Lord.
7. We practice self denial and pray for the renewed coming of Jesus to our Church, to our friends, and to our world.

The whole Old Testament story is one long advent awaiting the restoration of fallen mankind by the promised Redeemer. Adam made Him necessary. Noah had a glimpse of Him. Abraham was promised Him. Moses foreshadowed Him. The prophets foretold Him. The Baptist made straight His path. We today mystically enter this story and harvest the benefits of Him.

This Advent is the best yet because we have the chance to enter the story in a deeper way than ever. May the Holy Spirit empower us to identify with our Messiah Jesus this Advent to the glory of God our Father. Amen.