

## THE ADVENT WREATH MEANING AND ORIGIN



The Catholic Advent wreath is a cherished tradition observed during the weeks leading up to Christmas. The Advent wreath serves as a spiritual compass on our journey in preparation for the nativity of our Lord. It symbolizes hope, peace, joy and love through its four candles, each representing a week leading up to the birth of Christ. Let's explore the origin of the Advent wreath, the meaning behind the candles and how we can use it to grow in prayer this Advent season.

The origin of the Advent Wreath can be traced back to pre-Christian Germanic cultures who would light candles during the winter solstice to honor the return of the light. This practice was adopted by Christians in the Middle Ages as a way to mark the season of Advent. The circular shape of the wreath represents eternity, reminding us of God's infinite love and presence in our lives. The greenery used to decorate it symbolizes everlasting life and hope given to us by Jesus. The lighting of the candles sequentially each week provides us with a tangible way to mark the passing of time and encourages us to reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love.

The first candle, which is purple, represents HOPE. It reminds us of the unwavering hope we hold within us as we await the arrival of our savior. The second candle, also purple, signifies PEACE. It calls us to seek inner peace and also to spread peace to those around us. The third candle, which is rose-colored, embodies JOY. Lit on Gaudete Sunday, it serves as a reminder to rejoice that the coming of Christ is near. The fourth candle, purple like the first two, represents LOVE. It symbolizes the boundless love of God, which we are called to share with others.