

Introduction

This small booklet has been put together at the request of parents who are trying to make Advent more meaningful for their families. There has been a growing movement within the Church to restore the many traditional Advent customs that formed the well-loved part of family life when many of us were much younger.

Advent isn't easy. Physical preparation, cleaning, decorating, wrapping presents, limited resources which can lead to arguments and disappointments can rob us of time for spiritual preparation.

Unable to commercialise waiting, the world **ignores** Advent. Christmas music, decorations, and parties materialise in mid November and vanish in December 26. Who remembers that the twelve days of Christmas refer from December 25 until the Epiphany? Waiting until Christmas before celebrating has become a foreign idea - and it would be Scrooge-like to refuse to participate in the festivities, misplaced though they may be.

The purpose of this small booklet, therefore, is to search for other ways to provide families with ideas for home celebrations and help towards restoring the **true meaning of Advent to the family.**

One of the most important symbols is the **ADVENT WREATH** Page 1

We have also included another popular custom,
THE PROMISE BRANCH. Page 4

A beautiful custom already carried out in some homes and parishes is that of reminding us of Mary and Joseph looking for shelter. Hence we have the tradition of **SHELTER SEEKING.** Page 5

The Christmas tree is something we have all grown up with, but how many of us know of or understand
THE DRESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE ? Page 6

Advent is also a time for looking back, examining the present, and anticipating the future. To help us reflect on how we can live closer to God we have included two short stories:
THE ORPHAN'S ORANGE by S Carroll Page 9
A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS FOR ALL by Ursula Berg Page 10





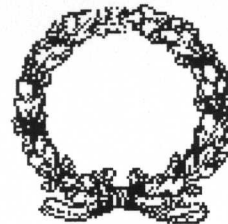
"Sounds nice. I hang one on my door every year."

Wrong ! An Advent wreath is one that you make or buy and has four candles in it. It is a very special way that Christians have of focusing on the coming of Christ **and if you haven't tried it, you're missing a lot.**

Wreaths can be bought , but it is more fun to make your own.

The Advent wreath imparts the spirit of Advent to us, and reminds us again and again of the Light to come at Christmas.

The circle of the wreath reminds us of the Eternal God, who is without beginning or end.



The evergreen speaks of God's everlasting love for us and of the hope that one day we will share this love and life in eternal bliss in heaven.



The four candles indicate the many hundreds of years when mankind awaited Christ's coming.



