

Fr. David's Weekly Newsletter



November 25, 2011

First Sunday of Advent • Beginning of the New Liturgical Year

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that your faithful may resolve to run forth with righteous deeds to meet your Christ who is coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.

The Psalms Enrich Our Relationship with God

At a recent Wednesday general audience the Holy Father imparted the final catechesis of his cycle dedicated to the Psalms. He focused on Psalm 110, which “Jesus Himself cited, and which the authors of the New Testament referred to widely and interpreted in reference to the Messiah. ... It is a Psalm beloved by the ancient Church and by believers of all times”, which celebrates “the victorious and glorified Messiah seated at the right hand of God.”

The Psalm begins with a solemn declaration: “The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Benedict XVI explained that “Christ is the Lord enthroned, the Son of man seated at the right hand of God. ... He is the true king who by resurrection entered into glory, ... higher than the angels, seated in the heavens over all other powers, ... and with all His adversaries at His feet until the last enemy, death, is definitively defeated by Him.”

The Psalm invites us to “look to Christ to understand the meaning of true regality which is to be lived as service and the giving of self, following a path of obedience and love ‘to the end’. Praying this Psalm, we therefore ask the Lord to enable us to proceed along this same journey, following Christ, the Messiah, willing to ascend with Him on the hill of the cross to accompany Him in glory, and to look to Him seated at the right hand of the Father, the victorious king and merciful priest Who gives forgiveness and salvation to all mankind.”

Finally, the Pope explained that, in the course of his catechesis dedicated to the Psalms, he had sought to focus on those “that reflect the different situations in life and the various attitudes we may have towards God. I would like to renew my call to everyone to pray the Psalms, to become accustomed to using the Liturgy of the Hours, Lauds, Vespers, and Compline. Our relationship with God can only be enriched by our journeying towards Him day after day.”



Lord make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

What is the Liturgy of the Hours?

Liturgical Prayer ... the public, daily prayer of the Church - of Christ and his people. A sacred action surpassing all others ... the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit.

Prayer which is intimately related to the Eucharist and is a preparation for and a continuation of the action of the Eucharist.

Prayer which is about the sanctification of time - of each day, and is linked with the Feasts and Seasons of the Liturgical Year as well as with the natural rhythms of the day.

Prayer which relies heavily on Scripture ... the psalms and the canticles as well as readings from the old and new testaments.

Prayer which has a long history in the Church, going back to first centuries; prayer which originated in gatherings of the people and later spread to monastic and other religious groups.

Prayer which has a basic formal structure, both within the day and within each individual hour.

Prayer which is prayed communally in formal gatherings, or in informal groups; but which may also be prayed by individuals who are not able to pray it in common.

Whether prayed communally or by individuals, the Liturgy of the Hours is always the liturgical prayer of the Church: the prayer of Christ the priest and of the Body of Christ, the Church throughout the world and the Communion of Saints in heaven.

What is the Structure of the Liturgy of the Hours?

The Liturgy of the Hours, or the Divine Office is the daily prayer of the Church which is prayed at certain significant times of the day. It includes the Invitatory and a number of "hours."

Invitatory ~ This is the opening prayer of the Office and is prayed at the beginning of the day before the first hour of the Office.

Morning Prayer ~ This hour is prayed at sunrise or in the early morning. It is one of the two most important (hinge) hours of the Office.

Daytime Prayer ~ It is suggested that one of these hours, that which is most convenient for the individual, be prayed. The daytime hours are: Midmorning; Midday; Midafternoon

Evening Prayer ~ This hour is prayed at sunset, i.e. late afternoon or early evening. It is the second of the hinge hours and, like Morning Prayer, should be prayed in common if possible.

Night Prayer ~ This is the "bedtime" hour of the Church's daily prayer and is ordinarily prayed just before retiring.

Office of Readings ~ This is the only hour which does not have a designated time. In the reforms of the Second Vatican Council it was determined that, because of the varied schedules of people today it would be better to leave to the group or individual praying, the ability to establish the time for the praying of this meditative hour of reflection on Scripture and writings of spiritual authors.

Resources for Praying the Liturgy of the Hours

There are several editions of the Liturgy of the Hours, ranging from a four-volume set containing all the texts for the entire Liturgical Year, to single-volume editions containing full or abbreviated versions of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer.

The books can be intimidating for a beginner to navigate, but once the pattern of the Liturgical Calendar, and structure of the Office is understood, they are a valuable resource for prayer.

Modern technology has provided more convenient methods of praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

Websites

Some of the websites provide the entire Liturgy of the Hours on a daily basis for free; others provide portions for free, while the entire Office may require a subscription.

www.ebreviary.com

www.divineoffice.org

www.universalis.com

There's an App for that

There are various paid and free applications available online. A good starting point would be the websites listed above. But a quick web search will yield various formats and versions for particular hardware and operating systems. Often these are easily found in the application stores or various online marketplaces for your particular device or platform.

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ADVENT TRIVIA CHALLENGE

1. What does Advent mean?

The English word “Advent” comes from the Latin word “adveniat.” What does that word mean?

- a. Preparation b. Darkness c. Coming d. Mourning

2. What feast marks the beginning of Advent?

Advent is a liturgical season that begins on the Sunday nearest to what liturgical feast?

- a. All Saints Day b. Feast of St. Andrew c. Feast of St. Matthew d. Thanksgiving

3. How many Sundays are in Advent?

The first Sunday of Advent may be as early as November 27th, and then Advent has twenty-eight days; or as late as December 3rd, giving the season only twenty-one days.

- a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

4. What shape is an Advent wreath?

The shape of the Advent wreath evokes the idea of God who is eternal - having no beginning and no end.

- a. Square b. Circle c. Triangle d. Rectangle

5. What two colors are the candles in an Advent wreath?

The majority of the weeks are symbolized by one color, and one candle is a different color.

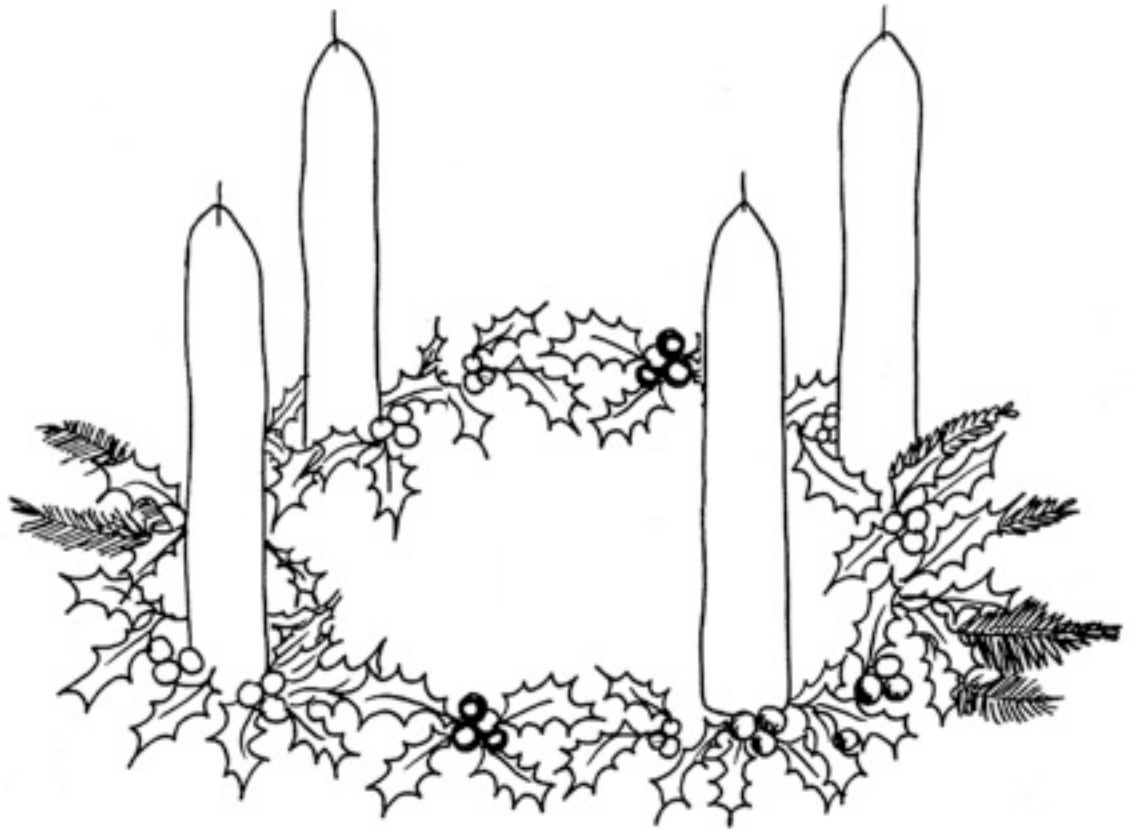
- a. Blue, Green b. Red, Pink c. Violet, Rose d. White, Purple

6. What do the two colors symbolize?

- a. Penance, Joy b. Growth, Healing c. Age, Youth d. Time, Eternity



Color three of the candles violet (or purple), and color one of the candles rose (or pink). The rose candle is for the third week of Advent - marking the half-way point until Christmas.



A E O I R Y D I S C I P L E S B D P D T
 C Z Y J Y H J Z Z F Z Z F F O V X M F Y
 M G D V C T R A V E L I N G X V J R Z D
 V K Z T G F Z X Y W Y F V J P X I I X X
 X J A K Y Z M O R N I N G F J F Z U W U
 B W K Y F V B F Z Y W Z V V K K W W D J
 E W B J J Q D P Z Y B B O P S G J R X J
 C C G T X A J K H O M E Z T W G O P Q X
 G X J F O W M P P V Q Q N Q Y L Z Z Y W
 A X Z R Y A M Q V X Q A S L E E P I N G
 T Q B P J T J Q P P V Q Z Z W Y Q Y Y J
 E A X G Y C Y B Z R Y E Q D J N Z G V U
 K Y Y Z P H Q Q E Q M W Z S F C J J M X
 E Z C O X F J S E I W M U G W O R K I Y
 E Z H R X U W Z T V W S V V K M F W D F
 P Y A D Y L Y B F W E Z N L J I Z Y N V
 E Z R E Z X F W P J C N Z K W N Y F I O
 R W G R Z I Z Q W W M J I X L G Y X G V
 L W E S Q A A L E R T W Y N X X O B H Z
 Z Q W Z M C M Q Q Z J F W C G V Q V T M

WORD BANK

- Abroad
- Alert
- Charge
- Coming
- Disciples
- Evening
- Gatekeeper
- Home
- Jesus
- Lord
- Midnight
- Morning
- Orders
- Servants
- Sleeping
- Time
- Traveling
- Watch
- Watchful
- Work