



## *The Season of Advent*

The First Sunday of Advent is December 3, 2023. On this Sunday the Catholic Church begins a new liturgical year.

The church teaches the following:

“39. Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation.

40. Advent begins with evening prayer I of the Sunday falling on or closest to 30 November and ends before evening prayer I of Christmas. 41. The Sundays of this season are named the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Sundays of Advent. The weekdays from 17 December to 24 December inclusive serve to prepare more directly for the Lord's birth.”

*[Taken from the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, issued by Rome February 14, 1969]*

**What would you like to know about Advent? See Advent information below:**

- ✚ Want to learn about Advent, but don't have much time. Watch the video from Busted Halo called “Advent in Two Minutes.” Click here:
- ✚ Read about the Season of Advent and the purpose of the four Sundays of Advent.
- ✚ The Meaning of the Advent Wreath.
- ✚ How to make your own Advent Wreath.
- ✚ You can bless your own Advent Wreath in your home.
- ✚ Do you know there are many different Advent Calendars that mark the days leading up to Christmas?
- ✚ Catholics pray in a special way the days leading up to Christmas by praying the “O” Antiphons” which are prayed from December 17 – December 24. Pray along with the monks of St. John's Abbey as they sing O Antiphon for each day.
- ✚ Here is a list of special Advent recipies.



Watch the video from Busted Halo entitled: **“Advent in Two Minutes”**



Busted Halo: Advent in Two Minutes  
<https://bustedhalo.com/video/watch-advent-two-minutes>

If you enjoyed this video from Busted Halo you might enjoy more videos and/or listening to their special podcasts.

[Busted Halo is the Ministry of the Paulist Fathers.](#)



### *Advent Calendars*

A very popular symbol used to celebrate the Season of Advent is the Advent Calendar. Many Christians use the Advent Calendar to mark the days leading up to the Nativity [December 25]. The Advent Calendar is believed to have been created by Christians in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to mark the days of Advent leading up to Christmas.

Advent calendars are made for use in the home. They enable families to enter the Advent Season in a special way by counting down the days to Christmas. They are a great way to generate anticipation and excitement in the home. Some Advent calendars have doors that open to reveal a symbol of Advent or Christmas, while others have symbols that are individually placed on the calendar for each day. Some special Advent calendars even have chocolates or other treasures hidden behind each door or window.

The most popular Advent Calendars are those made with chocolate figures behind each advent door. Fresh Market usually sells them in their stores.

If you go online you can find Advent Calendars filled with perfumes, cheeses, jerky, whiskey and beer, coffee, and a variety of candies and meats. You name it. An Advent Calendar has been produced to meet your every need!!

# The Meaning of Advent

The word “Advent” is taken from the Latin – “ad-venire” meaning “TO COME.” The season of Advent celebrates and makes real our belief that Jesus Christ came in the past, comes in the present, and will come again in the future.

As we begin a new liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent, December 3, 2023, we begun the cycle of Gospel readings from the **GOSPEL OF MARK**.



## THE ADVENT SEASON CELEBRATES CHRIST’S COMING IN THE FUTURE, IN THE PRESENT, AND IN THE PAST.

The first two Sundays of Advent celebrate our belief in Christ’s **SECOND COMING**.

The Third Sunday of Advent celebrates our belief in Christ’s **COMING** among us in the present.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent celebrates Christ’s **COMING** in the past.

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – CHRIST COMING FUTURE



In Mark’s Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent we are reminded to “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.” [Mark 13:33]. We do not know when Christ will come again! As Christians we are meant to live our lives with this profound **HOPE** that Christ will indeed **COME** again.

The second reading from Thessalonians gives us examples of how we are to live in preparation for the second **COMING**.

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.”

Thus, we pray at the beginning of Mass: Let us Pray:

### Collect

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,  
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ  
with righteous deeds at his coming,  
so that, gathered at his right hand,  
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

[Collect for the First Sunday of Advent, Roman Missal]

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – CHRIST COMING FUTURE

In the Gospel for the **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT** we are told that God sends messengers into our midst to remind us of Christ's coming. In Mark's Gospel, John the Baptist proclaims to the people "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



In the second reading from 2Peter we receive the message that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out."

The message is clear. We need to live lives in preparation for the second COMING. The message in 2Peter states: "Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. . . Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.

Thus, we pray at the beginning of Mass: Let us Pray:

### Collect

Almighty and merciful God,  
may no earthly undertaking hinder those  
who set out in haste to meet your Son,  
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom  
gain us admittance to his company.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

[Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent, Roman Missal]

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – CHRIST COMING PRESENT



The **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** reminds us that Christ **COMES TO US TODAY** if only we will recognize him.

The Gospel today has John the Baptist proclaiming that the “Christ” is already among them. He says: “I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

Thus, we pray at the beginning of Mass: Let us Pray:

### Collect

O God, who see how your people  
faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity,  
enable us, we pray,  
to attain the joys of so great a salvation  
and to celebrate them always  
with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

[Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent, Roman Missal]

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – CHRIST COMING PAST

The **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT** celebrates Christ’s **COMING IN THE PAST**. The Gospel recounts the appearance of the angel to Mary long ago announcing that “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.” The angel also foretells that Elizabeth, who was barren, will also conceive a son.

Thus, we pray at the beginning of Mass: Let us Pray:

### Collect

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,  
your grace into our hearts,  
that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son  
was made known by the message of an Angel,  
may by his Passion and Cross  
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

[Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Roman Missal]

On the final days of Advent the church prepares intensely for the celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord. From December 17 to December 24 the church prays the “O Antiphons.” [See the article below].

# *The Advent Wreath*

## **Advent Wreath - Origins and Meaning of the Advent Wreath Today.**

The Advent wreath has long been a part of our catholic tradition. The advent wreath was originally meant for use in the HOME, not in the church.

When it is in the church it should be hung from the ceiling. It may also be placed in a stand. If it is placed in the sanctuary, it should not obscure the altar, ambo or the chair.

If the Advent wreath is used in the church it is blessed on the First Sunday of Advent. The blessing may take place during Mass.

We are not sure of the origin of the advent wreath but there is evidence that it began in the homes of Germanic Christians who used wreaths with lit candles during the dark days of December. The wreath became a sign of home for warmer days and long hours of sun light. Another story is that in winter in Scandinavia lighted candles were placed around a wheel and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn the while of the earth back to the sun to lengthen the days and restore the warmth.

Today the Advent wreath is a symbol we use to mark the weeks of Advent when we preparing for Christmas. It is usually made of evergreen branches. The wood of the branches reminds us of the wood of the cross upon which Christ gave his life for us. The four candles represent the four weeks of advent.

Three candles are purple and one candle is rose. The purple candles remind us that we are entering a season of prayer and preparation for the coming of Christ. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday of Advent. This is called "Gaudete Sunday." Gaudete means "rejoice" because we are now midway through Advent. On this Sunday the priest will also wear rose vestments.



# Make your own Advent Wreath



You can make your own advent wreath for your home. You can buy a fresh [or plastic] evergreen wreath at a store. Or you can cut your own evergreen branch from a tree and put it in a circle using wire etc. Purchase 3 purple candles and 1 pink candle. You can insert these into the wreath or buy small candles holders and set them within the wreath. Some people decorate the wreath with ribbons, pine cones, and/or flowers.

## The Danish Advent Wreath.

Here is a different idea to hold up the candles from the Advent wreath using a braided loaf of bread. One good thing about this recipe is that no-one is going to actually eat it. It's going to be sitting on your table for a month, so you're really just going for looks.

### For the pastry

- 2 envelopes yeast
- 1 c. milk, brought almost to boiling
- 1/2 c. shortening or butter
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 beaten eggs
- 4 1/2 c. flour

### For the filling

- 2 Tbsp. butter (melted)
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 c. golden raisins, raisins, or craisins

Combine last three ingredients.

### For the Glaze

- 1 egg yolk
- 2 Tbsp. milk



### Directions

1. Place the milk, shortening, sugar, and salt in a small saucepan. Heat until the shortening (or butter) is just melted. Cool to lukewarm and sprinkle in the yeast. Let sit for about 5 minutes while the yeast gets fizzy, or "proofs" (if you want to get technical).
2. Add the eggs and the flour, mix until dough forms.
3. Knead on a lightly floured surface until smooth and elastic (for about 8 minutes)
4. Place in a greased bowl, turn once, and cover with saran wrap. Let rest in a warm place (I often use the oven) until double.
5. Punch the dough down, Cover and let rest for 10 minutes.
6. Divide the dough into three pieces. Roll each of these pieces into strips about 2 inches in diameter. Brush the pieces with the melted butter and roll in the filling. Braid the strips together, working from the middle out toward each end. Turn the ends together to form a wreath 12 inches in diameter. Use a well-greased bundt pan for a tighter-looking wreath or if you don't have a bundt pan, you can use a cookie sheet as below:
7. Cover and let rise again until double. (about 30-40 min)
8. Brush with the glaze and bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes.

# Bless Your Own Advent Wreath!!

The use of the [Advent Wreath](#) is a traditional practice which has found its place in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent. When the blessing of the Advent Wreath is celebrated in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another member of the family. [From *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*]



All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Leader:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

[Pick a scriptural reading from the bible from one of the following selections:]

[Isaiah 9](#): (lines 1-2 and 5-6)

[Isaiah 63](#) (lines 16-17 & 19)

[Isaiah 64](#) (lines 2-7) is read:

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All. Thanks be to God.



With hands joined, the leader says:

Leader:

Lord our God,

we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:

he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,

he is the wisdom that teaches and guides

us,

he is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,

let your blessing come upon us

as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light

be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All. Amen.

The blessing may conclude with a verse from

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

O come, desire of nations, bind

in one the hearts of humankind;

bid ev'ry sad division cease

and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

shall come to thee, O Israel.

—From *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*





## Pray The "O" Antiphons

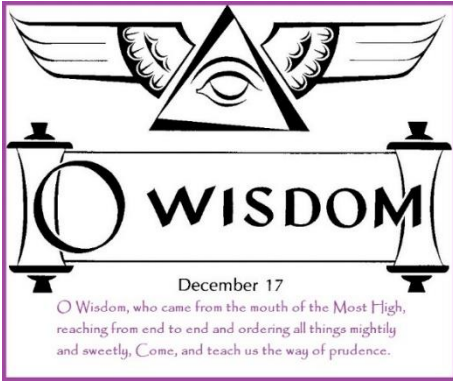
Many people ask: "How can I prepare in a special way for Christmas." The Church has long provided us with a special way to do this through prayer entitled the "O Antiphons."

The Roman Church has been singing the "O" Antiphons since at least the eighth century. They are the antiphons that accompany the *Magnificat* canticle of Evening Prayer from December 17-23. They are a MAGNIFICENT THEOLOGY that uses ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but present ones as well. Their repeated use of the imperative "Come!" embodies the longing of all for the Divine Messiah.

O Antiphons and Corresponding Symbols: <a href="#">[top]</a>			
December 17:	<b>O Wisdom</b>	Oil lamp, open book, dove (Holy Spirit)	
December 18:	<b>O Lord and Ruler</b>	Burning bush, stone tablets	
December 19:	<b>O Root of Jesse</b>	flower, plant with flower, root with flowering stem, stump with roots with flower growing	

<p><b>December 20:</b></p>	<p><b>O Key of David</b></p>	<p>Key, broken chains</p>	
<p><b>December 21:</b></p>	<p><b>O Rising Dawn</b></p>	<p>Sunrise, sun</p>	
<p><b>December 22:</b></p>	<p><b>O King of the Gentiles (Nations)</b></p>	<p>Crown and scepter</p>	
<p><b>December 23:</b></p>	<p><b>O Emmanuel or O God With Us</b></p>	<p>Manger, Chalice and host, Crown with tablets</p>	
<p><b>December 24:</b></p>	<p><b>Christmas Eve</b></p>	<p>Altar for Mass</p>	
<p><b>December 25:</b></p>	<p><b>Christmas Eve</b></p>	<p>Nativity scene, Christ child in manger</p>	

## December 17 – O Sapientia or O Wisdom [Sirach 24:3]

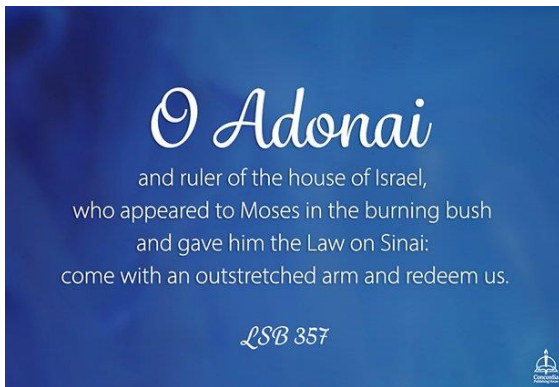


O Wisdom of our God Most High,  
guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

[lick here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRPNRHQL17E>

## December 18 – O Adonai or O Lord & Ruler [Exodus: 3:14]

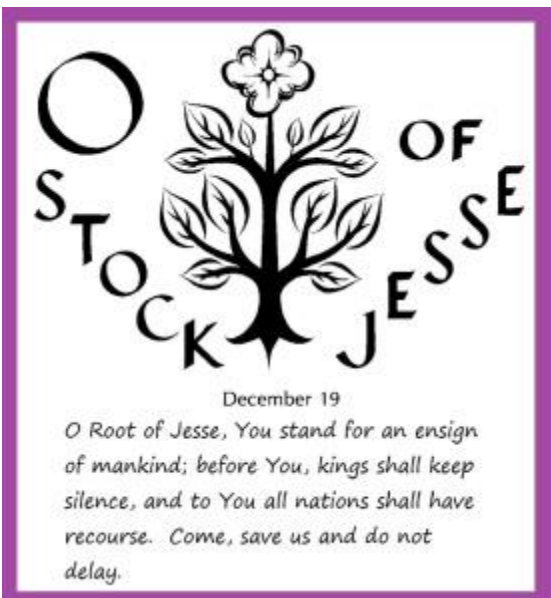


O Leader of the House of Israel,  
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

Click here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Zonv2a\\_WOs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Zonv2a_WOs)

## December 19 – O Radix Jesse or O Root of Jesse [Isaiah 11:1]

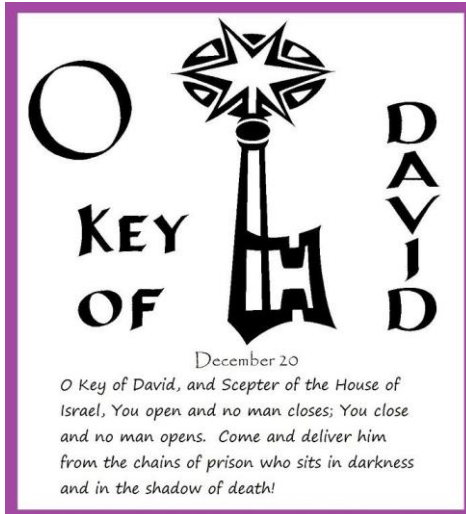


O Root of Jesse's stem,  
sign of God's love for all his people:  
come to save us without delay!

Click here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O75VBNAeMQg>

## December 20 – O Clavis David or O Key of David [Isaiah 22:22]

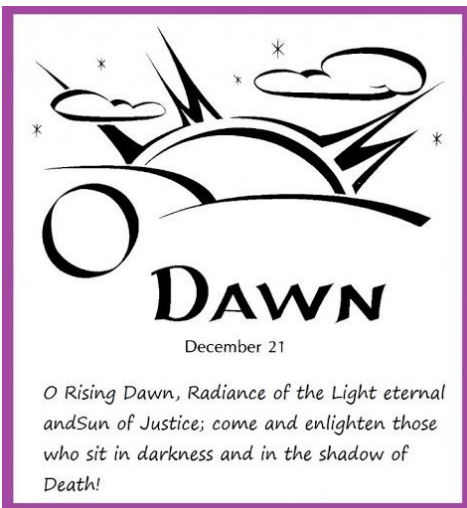


O Key of David,  
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:  
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

Click here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebppj1Gg0vU>

## December 21 – O Oriens or O Rising Dawn or Morning Star [Isaiah 9:2]



O Radiant Dawn,  
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:  
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the  
shadow of death.

Click here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ottaOLrHwNY>

## December 22 – O Rex Gentium or O King of the Nations [Jer. 10:7]

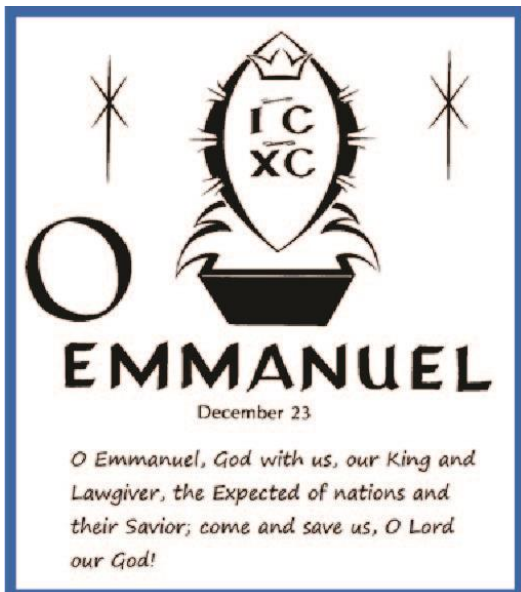


O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

Click here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJlrcbT3HYM>

## December 23 – O Emmanuel or God With Us [Isaiah 7:14]



O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:  
come to save us, Lord our God!

Click here or paste to listen to the monks of St. John's Abbey sing this O Antiphon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmWlf4lrcpY>

# Advent Foods

Many cultures have always prepared special foods for different liturgical seasons.  
Daily Recipes for the Advent Season

## December 3rd, St. Francis Xavier (New, Trad.):

- [St. Francis Xavier - December 3](#) (Polla a la Vasca- Basque Chicken with Pimiento)
- [Xaver Suppe \(Soup for St. Francis Xavier's Day\)](#)



## December 6th, St. Nicholas of Myra (New, Trad.):

- [Upcoming From Thy Bounty Fair, St. Nicholas](#) (includes links
- [From Thy Bounty Fair, St. Nicholas](#) (more links and ideas!)
- [St. Joseph's Staff](#) (Candy Cane Cookie Recipe)
- [Candy Cane Coffee Cake](#)
  
- [Saint Nicholas Cocoa Mix](#)
- [A Chocolate St. Nicholas](#)

and ideas)



- [Speculatius \(German Spice Cookies\)](#)

## December 7th, St. Ambrose (New, Trad.):

- [Christmas Honey Cookies for the "Honey-Tongued" Saint](#)
- [Sweet Beehive Cake for St. Ambrose](#)
- [Bumblebee Cookies for St. Ambrose](#)
  
- [Honey-Curry Chicken](#)



**December 8, The Immaculate Conception (New, Trad.):**

- [Meal Ideas for the feast of the Immaculate Conception](#)
- [Blueberry Muffins for Our Lady](#)
- [Mary's Immaculate Conception](#) (A complete dinner menu!)



**December 9th, St. Juan Diego (New):**

- [Mexican Chocolate Cake](#)
- [Una Fiesta Mexicana](#)
- [Rosy Treats for the Feasts of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe](#)
- [Mexican Sopapias for St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe](#)
- [Fish Tacos for Friday](#)
- [Cheese Enchiladas](#)
- [Our Lady of Guadalupe ~ Mexican Wedding Cookies](#)



**December 12th, Our Lady of Guadalupe (New, Trad.):**

- [Mexican Chocolate Cake](#)
- [Una Fiesta Mexicana](#)
- [Rosy Treats for the Feasts of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe](#)
- [Mexican Sopapias for St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe](#)
- [Fish Tacos for Friday](#)
- [Cheese Enchiladas](#)
- [Our Lady of Guadalupe ~ Mexican Wedding Cookies](#)



**December 13th, St. Lucy or Santa Lucia Day (New, Trad.):**

- [St. Lucia's Braided Bread](#)
- [Cuccia ~ St. Lucy Wheat](#)
- [St. Lucia Buns ~ Lussekatter](#)

**December 17th thru 23rd, O Antiphons (New, Trad.):**

- [O Antiphons](#)

**December 24th, Vigil of Christmas (Trad.):**

- [Starlight Cookies for the Last Week of Advent](#)



**December 25th, Christmas - The Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ (New, Trad.):**

- [From Thy Bounty Fair - Holiday Foods and Feasts!](#)
- [First Holy Communion Breads](#)
- [Staples of Our Feast Day Celebrations Part One: Bread](#)
- [Staples of Our Feast Day Celebrations Part Two: Wine](#)
- [Mealtime Prayers for Christmas](#)
- [Christmas Panettone](#)
- [Lamb of God \(Rolls\)](#)
  
- [Christ's Diapers](#)
- [Monkey Bread Birthday Breakfast Christmas Cake](#)
- [Candy Cane Coffee Cake](#)
- [Cherry Cheese Coffee Cake for Christmas](#)
  
- [The Gift of the Christmas Cookie](#)
- [Nativity Cookies](#)

