

# FAMILY ADVENT CUSTOMS

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ADVENT is a very special time of the year, and it is usually filled with all kinds of Christmas excitement. It is, also, the beginning of the new liturgical year. It is a season of spiritual preparation, marked by an eager longing for the coming of the Savior through grace at Christmas, and for His second and final coming. It is an ideal time to establish in our homes good customs (liturgical and otherwise) which will restore our children to the Christ Child. It is a time to restore a proper sense of beauty, holiness and serenity. It is a time to teach our children the correct way of interpreting and understanding the real values which the spirit of this part of the year should present to them. It is the obligation of the parents to explain the matter of Christmas to their children. The parents should demonstrate how all the things of Christmas should be kept in their proper order of importance. For example: Santa Claus is not the central figure of Christmas, and things are not being prepared to give pleasure to him. At the same time, neither is he a sin - as some seem to think. Given proper instruction, the children would soon come to understand that Santa Claus is a good being, whose purpose is to give service to the Christ Child.

Secularism has invaded our lives and household, and our ecclesiastical leaders, who were ordained to lead others to Christ, have failed in their ordination, and in so many cases simply do not lead the people entrusted to them in the direction of Jesus Christ! They have failed to teach the Christian how to make his home holy; they have failed to bring about a proper and good and wholesome union between the altar and the home; they have failed to properly reflect Jesus Christ, the King of all the Universe, Whose shelter at the time of His Birth was a stable where common beast of burden lived.

Children like the beauty and simplicity of family religious practices, and therefore, make little traditions easy to establish. The little Christmas traditions, which are the lasting part of Christmas, recall to the older members of the family the long forgotten practices of their own childhood. Long after the toys and other Christmas things have gone into the land of forgetfulness, the simple family customs of this most lovely time of the year will remain in the awareness of the little children for years yet to come.

