

Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent (from "ad-venire" in Latin, or "to come to") is the season encompassing the four Sundays (and weekdays) leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to the anniversary of Our Lord's birth on Christmas, as well as to Christ's second coming at the end of time. The Church Fathers, too, speak of an intermediate coming of Christ; namely, a spiritual coming into our hearts.

Like Lent, the liturgical color for Advent is violet since both are seasons that prepare us for great feast days. Thus, Advent also includes an element of penance like Lent in the sense of preparing, quieting, and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas.

Of all spiritual practices a person could begin or return to this Advent season, the one that I would most recommend is the sacrament of Penance. This sacrament, given to us by Christ, offers us reconciliation with God and the Church, the forgiveness of sins, restoration of the state of grace, remission of eternal and temporal punishment, and increased spiritual strength to resist future sin.

For this reason, during Advent, the sacrament of Penance will be offered at Corpus Christi at the normal times, as well as 2:30pm-4:30pm Saturday and 5pm-6pm Tuesday through Friday. Confession is also always available at the church office or in the church by appointment. What better way to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming than by removing from them any obstacle keeping us from his grace!

"Brothers and sisters: You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11).

Father Frei