

MULTIPLE SYMBOLS IN THE ADVENT WREATH

- Its circular shape gives it no beginning or end, symbolising the eternity of God and his love, and the everlasting life that Christ wants to give us all.
- The types of branches used are all from evergreen trees, trees that remain green during the coldest, darkest days of winter. They remind us that Christ's love remains fresh and strong even in life's most difficult moments.
- The holly branches are bordered with small prickly edges, reminding us of the Christ's crown of thorns, and of the suffering by which he won his victory over sin and evil.
- The four candles represent the four Sundays of Advent and should only be lighted on Sundays – not during the week. *(There should only be four candles on the wreath, not five. It is an advent wreath, not an Advent & Christmas wreath. Advent is a season of waiting. There is a tendency in our post-modern culture to 'complete' or 'cap off' everything leaving little room for 'anticipation' or 'waiting'. Another example of this is adding on a 15th station when everyone know there are only 14).*
- The light of the candles represents Christ himself, who is the light of the world. His Word shows us how we should live – it is 'a lamp for my steps and a light for my path'. His love for us expressed through the Eucharist takes away the coldness of our hearts.
- We light the candles gradually throughout Advent, because we know that the joy of salvation doesn't come fully into our lives all at once. Rather, life as a Christian is a journey, a relationship with Jesus that has to be constantly renewed, just as a fresh candle is lit every Sunday.
- If we are faithful to this friendship and don't abandon our journey, the fullness of joy will eventually be ours.