

Christmas in the Home

In every Christmas home there should be certain definite ways of preparing for Christmas. The members of the families should work together for the spiritual welfare of one another, and one of the easiest and most appealing ways of doing this is by uniting in common, external observances of the season of Advent. Among such observances, the following three are recommended to all.

1. Special family prayers during Advent. This would be a good time to start the family rosary, if it had not been the custom throughout the year. In reciting the rosary during Advent, the joyful mysteries should be used. If it is a daily custom to say the family rosary in the home, the litany of the Blessed Virgin may be added just for the four weeks preceding Christmas. It will help the family to think of Christmas if a little altar is prepared in the home, with statues of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph enshrined, before which the prayers are said.

2. Special practices of self-denial. For example, all members of the family can agree to do without dessert on three days of the week. Or all can agree to give up candy, or eating between meals, or staying away from movies, dances,

etc. during Advent. The important thing is that something be chosen as a penance that can be agreed on by all, so that it is a family affair, and not something adopted separately by each individual.

3. Special gifts to the poor. Christmas has, throughout the ages, been a reminder of the great blessing attached to giving to the poor. If an Advent altar is prepared in the home, a box may be placed upon it into which each member of the family is encouraged to drop a coin now and then, destined for the poor. Even very small children may be given coins for little chores done, with the urging that they place them in the family poor box. Then shortly before Christmas the sum gathered may be handed over to an organization that works for the poor, or used to provide something needed by a poor family.

Children brought up in a home that thus prepares for Christmas will never lose their awareness of the spiritual significance of the feast. And older members of families will possess far greater and deeper joy on Christmas day if they have thus awaited the renewed coming of Christ. (Liguorian).