

CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE – THE LITTLE THINGS



THE ADVENT CUSTOM OF BLESSED WHEAT



Select a flowerpot or a shallow container about 10 inches in diameter. Clean it thoroughly and decorate it with the help of your children. Fill it with fresh potting soil and place it in some easily accessible place near a window which is bright and sunny. As you take the blessed grains of wheat home with you, instruct your children that, beginning with the first day of Advent, each member of the family (including the grownups), with EACH ACT OF SACRIFICE OR SELF-DENIAL OR GOOD WORK PERFORMED IN SECRET, is to plant one grain of wheat in the pot. The planted grains of wheat will soon develop tender shoots, and on Christmas Day each shoot will be a reminder of a gift given to the Baby Jesus. The young wheat must be kept properly watered, and on Christmas Day, before going to see what Santa has brought, the wheat plants of love and sacrifice are placed near the Crib. THE WHEAT REPRESENTS REAL GIFTS – FIT FOR THE LITTLE KING OF KINGS. With proper care, the plants should easily last until Epiphany. After that they may be planted out of doors where they will continue to develop and remain a source of interest.

This is but one of the many little things that pertain to the Christmas Season, and which, if entered into with the proper spirit and intention, will keep the entire family interested as each new day offers more opportunities for gifts for our Infant Lord. These customs which we present are some of the FORGOTTEN customs of Catholic living and life. They were once well known, and they were developed over the years by the religious experience of the Church – little, child-like customs, profound customs, that brought Catholic living and life into focus within the family circle. Each year these customs were fresh and crisp and adults and children alike looked forward to them. Let us not introduce customs that are out of context with true Catholic life and living, so that our children will not be confused when they are later faced with the broken-up life of the world. Customs, however, that have evolved out of personal and private preferences will soon wilt and will eventually be put out of the mind of the child.



If we keep the Holy Vision in our hearts and minds and all our activities, and in the hearts and minds and activities of our children, we need have no concern about the customary Christmas fantasy preparations – they will be in proper focus. Let us not be made to feel uncomfortable by the vicious attacks upon the customary and innocent holiday fantasies (whether they concern Christmas, Easter, or etc.). **If we take the old fantasies away from our children we will create a void in their young minds – a void which WILL be filled, one way or another.** With all the filth and ugliness that is now everywhere, our little ones are more and more turning to matters too horrible to speak of. The final question we must answer is: Which is better for our children – WHOLESOME FANTASY or SOUL-WRENCHING FILTH? Let us be watchful of those who are on the warpath against legitimate childhood fantasies – such as were enjoyed by all in normal, Catholic, and happy childhood days of yesteryear!



ADVENT

Advent
Wreath

AD 2010

Family
Home Altars



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 the season of spiritual preparation, marked by an eager longing for the coming of our 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 lead us and our children to a better understanding of Jesus Christ. It is a good time for us to upgrade our sense of beauty, holiness, peace, and serenity and **prayer**. It is a time to teach our children (by example as well as by words) the correct way of interpreting, understanding, and applying the real values which the spirit of this part of the year should present to us. It is the obligation of the parents to properly explain the matter of Christmas to their children. The parents should demonstrate how all the things of Christmas should be kept in their order of importance. For example, Santa Claus is not the central figure of Christmas, and things are not being prepared in his honor. At the same time, however, neither is he (Santa Claus) a sin – as some erroneously think and teach. Given proper instruction, the children will soon come to understand that Santa Claus can be a good being, whose purpose is to give service and honor to the Christ Child.

Secularism has invaded our lives and households, and unfortunately, some of our ecclesiastical leaders, who were ordained to lead others to Christ, have failed in their ordination, and in 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 life holy; 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 beasts of burden lived.



Children like the beauty and simplicity of family religious (and secular) practices, and therefore make little traditions easy to establish. The little Christmas traditions, which are the lasting part of Christmas, bring back 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 children for years to come.