

Before we humans traded in our hoes and tillers for keyboards and steering wheels, before we figured out how artificial lighting, hydroponic planting, central heating and the internal combustion engine could pretty much eliminate our sense of the seasonal flow of life, Advent, and the other seasons of the year actually meant something.

With the year's crop carefully sewn in the soil, the people we loved, with whom and for whom we sweated those months of planting fall, huddled around the family hearth. We knew what Advent was for.

We waited.

We celebrated the darkness in which our seeds would grow. We praised the night which we knew would soon turn to day --- but not too soon.

In the still of the Winter, we knew there grew the brightness of the Morning Star.

And we waited.

Not in idleness, in boredom, but in joyful anticipation.

Like the mother, knowing fully what is to come, looking so forward to the time's completion, yet never hurrying it's passing.

And so, we wait. Nurturing the seeds of life around us.

The Morning Star will come\_and the beauty of it all the more splendid for the waiting.

These final weeks of the natural year, we continue our journey toward the Light. Having sought, waited and received the Light, as we eventually enter the Christmas Season, we will be prepared to (like Christ) Become the light for our darkened world.

## Advent Music: Helping us wait, helping us yearn...

Why don't we just have regular Masses before Christmas. Why do we have a season of Advent?

This question actually comes before last week's question about why there aren't Christmas carols during Advent, because if we can see the beauty of the season as a planned anticipation, a time of preparation and refocusing (much like an engagement before a wedding) the holding off on carols 'til the actual day of Christmas makes sense.

The season of Advent is such a natural reflection of what is going on in the world of

nature (not necessarily the world of commerce) around us. Earlier cultures whose livelihood was more directly tied to the ebbs and flows of nature revered this Season as the harvest's dormant time, the gathering-of-fuel time, the less-time-in-the-field/more-time-around-the-hearth time. As the village watched the days grow shorter, all knew that at the Solstice (Dec 21), the tide would turn and the light again would win over the darkness.

**These days of waiting were not just thumb-twiddling "Hurry up, already" days of boredom. Reverence for the cycle of life, the fulfillment of nature's promises, the preciousness of light and the beauty of dormancy ---all this was part of the experience and conversation of the season.**