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Advent

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In the northern latitudes people have quite a specific idea of how Christmas and the Advent season preceding it should look. It is the dark time of the year, and thus there are many lights that shine during Advent. The light of a candle in particular really helps set the mood for Christmas. Streets and houses are decorated with many little lights. And outside we expect it to be cold—better yet if snow falls gently. A white Christmas. We think of specific music, and even in culinary terms we immediately associate certain meals with the celebration, which also puts us in a Christmas mood.

However, Central Europe is not the only place where Christmas is celebrated! In other regions of the world there are completely different traditions—no Christmas tree, no candles, no cookies. In some places it is generally warm, even summer. Is Christmas there any less festive? Does it have any less value? No! It's just that people there celebrate differently. The emphasis there is just as much on the birth of Christ as it is here. He is the focal point—or at least, He should be...

So it is also with the Advent season that extends throughout the year. There are regions where people prepare for the return of the Lord in ways that are outwardly different. The church buildings look different, our members wear different clothing, they play different

music. But there too, Christ is the focus. The anticipation of the Saviour is not any better or worse than here. It is only different.

Food for thought from a divine service by the Chief Apostle (from Unsere Familie 23/2020)

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