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ADVENT - HISTORY, MEANING AND CUSTOMS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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FOREWORD

The liturgy of the Church has always been the source of fascinating research. It is incomparably many-sided in its effect upon the world and upon the Church. The liturgy, serving as a supreme expression of the Church's life, has always borne the marks of the Church's conflicts and of the immense expansion of the Church's grasp on human living. And yet it has always remained, despite the fluctuating tides of history, the worshipping act of the Body of Christ by which the eternal kingdom comes to man here in time.

The liturgy, when it had been fully organized, enabled the Church to set about sanctifying human life within time by consecrating the chief natural points of every day with appropriate Christian prayers, publicly offered for and by the entire community. So in the same way the liturgical year, when its main outline had been completed, sanctified the annual round of the seasons, and set out to imprint on the rhythms of nature and its reflection in social life the stamp of distinctly Christian ideas. There is possibly no more effective method of keeping the plain Christian man and woman in mind of the elementary facts of Christian doctrine than by observing the ordered sequence of the liturgical seasons. The centrality of Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer of mankind is the incessant lesson when they are properly understood.

Following this philosophy I have tried in this thesis to examine the liturgical season of Advent and determine what some liturgical scholars and some ordinary people have conceived the main emphases, needs and themes of this season to be.

Consequently, I have divided the topic into three main divisions:
Advent -- Its History, Meaning and Customs.

It is one thing to have a knowledge of the course of liturgical history, of when this custom was introduced and where, of how such-and-such a prayer was given a new turn and by whom. It is quite another thing to determine or assess the effects of the liturgical year upon the ideas and devotions of the vast group of praying Christian men and women who are the Church. Therefore, I have kept the historical data down to a minimum. My particular interest here is not to present an historical survey of the source, age, etc. of the propers. For that I refer you to any of the several standard works in this field.

Instead, I have tried, first of all, to determine just what the over-all meaning of the season is, what its central message is, what themes are predominant, and what moods play a major role. Then, I tried to break down the propers of the individual Sundays and discover what each Sunday has to contribute to the over-all picture and what emphases are peculiar to it. For this I used only those propers which are contained in the authorized hymnal of the Synodical Conference. I regret, therefore, the omissions of the ancient Offertory Verses and Communion Verses for the Sundays.

I have included a special section on the Advent Ember Days. Since they are so definitely colored by and influenced by the Advent Liturgy, they might well be given some consideration under the topic as I have defined it.

The chapter on customs is by no means exhaustive. I have gathered a small number of salutary customs which are practised in various parts

of the Church and merely presented them for consideration.

The reader will immediately recognize that in very many instances this thesis does no more than summarize, sometimes in the same words, some of the great works on the liturgical year.

There is still a great deal to be said exegetically, historically, and otherwise about the Advent Season. It is my only desire that this thesis may in some small way open up the vast treasure stored up in the liturgical year.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY

Early Observances

Advent is usually regarded as a period of preparation for the feast of Christmas. Since Christmas itself was not generally observed before the middle of the fourth century, "it is not remarkable that the earliest clear reference to Advent, from an official source, dates from the end of the sixth century."¹

It was towards the middle of the fifth century, that consequent on the Christological heresies of Nestorius, the commemoration of the birth of our Savior rose to great prominence. It was then that a special season of preparation for Christmas began to make its appearance in the Liturgy at Ravenna, in Gaul, and in Spain.² Saint Caesarius of Arles (A.D. 542) urged the faithful to prepare for their Christmas Communion for some days before ('ante plures dies').³

¹K. A. Heinrich Kellerer, Heortology A History of The Christian Festivals From Their Origin To The Present Day, translated from the German by A Priest of the Diocese of Westminster (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truober & Co., 1908), p. 158.

²Ildefonso Schuster, The Sacramentary (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924), I, 158.

³W. K. Lowther Clarke, editor, Liturgy and Worship. A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), p. 211.

However, some sort of preparation existed before that. As early as A.D. 380 a Council of Saragossa decreed an eight day preparation for Christmas.⁴

It appears as if the observance of the Advent season began with an advent feast. The fast is older than the liturgical observance of Advent as such.⁵ It seems that the custom of fasting in preparation for the birthday of our Lord originated in the bishopric of Tours. The idea was to provide a Quadragesima like Lent but preparatory to the Nativity. Therefore, in order to have a penitential period of forty days as before Easter, the fast began on the feast of Saint Martin of Tours, November 11.⁶ This forty day Advent fast was often called the "Lent of Saint Martin",⁷ or Quadragesima Martini.⁸ Its date was definitely fixed by

⁴Gaspar Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal (Saint Paul, Minnesota: E. M. Lohmann Co., 1949), p. 4.

⁵Don Haering, "Advent," Orate Fratres, IV (December 1, 1929), 1.

⁶Martin Carlson, "The Church Year," Augustana Quarterly, V.21, 2 (April, 1942), 116.

Wilhelm Loehle, Neue-Schul-und-Kirchenbuch fuer Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses (Stuttgart: J. G. Liesching, 1859), Zweiter Theil, 42.

⁷Rodrigue Villeneuve, An Introduction to the Liturgical Year, Translated from the French by J. A. Otto Nisenzimmer, (New York: Pustet, 1946), p. 14.

⁸Heinrich Alt, Der Christliche Cultus (Berlin: G. W. F. Mueller, 1860), II.Abtheilung, p. 14.

Saint Perpetuus (A.D. 491), one of the successors of Saint Martin as Bishop of Tours.⁹ To complete the Lenten pattern, a carnival was held prior to Saint Martin's Day which corresponded to the Mardi Gras of Shrove Tuesday.¹⁰ "This day highlighted the merry-making of Autumn and was a day to be noted."¹¹

The same general pattern was followed in Gaul, for the First Council of Macon (A.D. 581) prescribed the same order:

Ut a feria S. Martini usque ad natale Domini secunda, quarta et sexta sabbati jejunetur, et sacrificia quadragesimali debeant ordine celebrari.¹²

Gueranger¹³ claims that this came to be the accepted practise and soon spread to the rest of France:

The Capitularia of Charlemagne, in the sixth book, leave us no doubt on the matter; and Rabanus Maurus, in the second book of his Institution of Clerics, bears testimony to this observance.

⁹Georg Rietschel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1900), Erster Band, pp. 201-02.

Prosper Gueranger, "Advent," The Liturgical Year, translated from the French by Laurence Shepherd, (Dublin: James Duffy, 1870), pp. 24-5.

¹⁰Alt, op. cit., see "kleine Carneval" p. 44.

¹¹Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 14.

¹²Alt, op. cit., see footnote on p. 44.

¹³Gueranger, op. cit., p. 25.

The fast spread into England, as we find from Venerable Bede's History;¹⁴ into Italy, as appears from a diploma of Astolphus, King of the Lombards, dated A.D. 753;¹⁵ into Germany, Spain, etc., proof of which may be seen in the learned work of Dom Martine, On The Ancient Rites of the Church.¹⁶ According to the writings of Pope Gregory the Great, Advent was introduced in Rome in the sixth century.¹⁷

The forty day practise sprang up slowly, unnoticed. It was never uniformly observed. In Rome the season was reduced to four weeks as early as the ninth century.¹⁸ In many places it was a simple abstinence, sometimes imposed only on the monks and clergy. For example in the province of Tours the fast was for the monks alone and was only for the month of December.¹⁹

In some areas the Advent fast began the Sunday after the feast of Saint Catherine, November 25, and continued until the feast of the Epiphany, January 6.²⁰

¹⁴Alt., op. cit., p. 44ff.

¹⁵Gueranger, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Haering, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁸villeneuve, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁹Kellner, op. cit., p. 158.

²⁰Alt., op. cit., pp. 44ff. and p. 300.

Subsequent Development

The number of Advent Sundays was not everywhere the same. It fluctuated between two and six,²¹ and in some cases even seven.²²

Abbo of Fleury, A.D. 1004, is a witness to the existence of a two-Sunday practise in a later period.²³ The Missale-Gallicanum Vetus contains two Masses in Adventum Domini. The manuscript cannot be earlier than the final years of the seventh century, and certainly is not later than the beginning of the following.²⁴

The Bobbio Missal contains three Masses in Adventum Domini, before the vigil of Christmas.²⁵

An observance of five Sundays in Advent was quite popular and widespread. In Spain the Advent season extended over five weeks according to the Lectionary of Silos,²⁶ dating from about A.D. 650, and the Lectionary of Toledo.²⁷ Charlemagne's Homiliarium contains five Sundays.²⁸

²¹Maering, op. cit., p. 2.

²²Paul Zeller Strodach, The Church Year (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1924), p. 22.

²³Kellner, op. cit., p. 160.

²⁴L. Duchesne, Christian Worship Its Origin And Evolution, translated by M. L. McClure (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1931), Fifth Edition, see the opinion which he advances and his agreement with Dolisle, p. 152.

²⁵Ibid., 158.

²⁶Kellner, op. cit., p. 159.

²⁷Rietschel, op. cit., p. 202.

²⁸Ibid.

Alcuin's Comes and other old Capitularies also have lessons for five Sundays.²⁹ Some parts of Italy and Gaul celebrated five Sundays.³⁰ Micrologus retains five Sundays and relates them to the five ages of the world and the five books of Moses; Amalarius, ninth century, attests to that too.³¹ Some editions of the Gregorian and Gelasian Sacramentaries count five Sundays.³² It was urged, in favor of the five Sundays, that according to the other practise of observing four Sundays, if Christmas fell on a Monday, Advent strictly speaking lasted only three weeks.³³

In order to have the full forty days preparation for Christmas sometimes even six Sundays were counted in Advent, often in reverse, so that the first would be nearest to Christmas. Even today the Ambrosian

²⁹Ernst Renke, Das Kirchliche Perikopensystem aus den ältesten Urkunden der Römischen Liturgie dargestellt und erläutert (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1847), pp. 379-80.

³⁰Rietschel, op. cit., p. 202.

³¹ibid.

³²for varying opinions and reasons see: Th. Kliefoth, Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienst-Ordnung in den deutschen Kirchen literarischen Bekennnissen, ihre Destruction und Reformation (Schworin: Stillor'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1861), Viertes Band, p. 403.

Rietschel, op. cit., p. 202.

Kellner, op. cit., p. 451

³³Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 202-03.

and Mozarabic liturgy mention six Sundays in Advent.³⁴

The lectionaries drawn up by Bishop Victor of Capua, A.D. 546-547, and used by Saint Boniface contain four epistles for the Sundays before Christmas, de Adventu.³⁵

The present system of counting four Sundays is said to date from the time of Gregory the Great.³⁶ The Gregorian Sacramentary, which represents the state of the Roman Liturgy at the time of Pope Adrian, A.D. c724, provides three Sundays in December with collects de Adventu Domini, and a dominica vacans.³⁷ This would make a total of four Sundays. In the appendix, however, five Sundays are reckoned before Christmas.³⁸ Later editions contain only four Dominicae adventus.³⁹

Schuster⁴⁰ admits that the Gregorian and Gelasian Sacramentaries, as well as several other ancient lectionaries, reckon five weeks, but points out that the lectionary lists of Capua, and Naples, and the custom of the Nestorians, who have only four weeks, bear witness in favor

³⁴Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 15, discusses the Ambrosian Liturgy.
 Clarke, op. cit., p. 211, discusses the Mozarabic Liturgy.
 Gueranger, op. cit., p. 29, discusses the possibility of six weeks in the Gallican Liturgy.

³⁵Kellner, op. cit., p. 160.

³⁶Clarke, op. cit., p. 211.

³⁷Duchesne, op. cit., p. 125.

³⁸Kellner, op. cit., pp. 159-60.

³⁹Rietschel, op. cit., p. 202.

⁴⁰Schuster, op. cit., p. 320.

of the antiquity of the four Sundays. Kellner⁴¹ feels that the Gelasian Sacramentary had five Sundays because it was revised for the use of the Frankish Churches. He maintains that all service-books of the Roman Rite contain only four Sundays. The divergence between Roman and Frankish use became very noticeable and gave rise to confusion. Amalarius⁴² remarks:

In all missals and lectionaries there are five Sundays in Advent, but in the Antiphoner there are only three offices and a Dominica vacans, and the Gregorian missal has only four Sundays in Advent.

Gradually the number of Sundays was reduced to four weeks. An allusion to this reduction can be found in a letter of Pope Saint Nicholas the First to the Bulgarians.⁴³

By the eighth century Advent was observed for four weeks in those parts of France where Roman influence had extended.⁴⁴

About A.D. 1080 Gregory VII fixed the number of Sundays in Advent at four, and suppressed deviations from the Roman custom of observing Advent.⁴⁵

Rietschel⁴⁶ says:

Vom 11. Jahrh. an wurden in Rom die vier Adventsontage endgültig festgestellt, deren erster zwischen den Tagen vom 27. Novbr. bis 3. Dezbr. wechseln kann.

⁴¹Kellner, op. cit., p. 160.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Guéranger, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁴Kellner, op. cit., p. 160.

⁴⁵Rietschel, op. cit., p. 202.

⁴⁶Kellner, op. cit., p. 453.

Fixing of the Period

Advent originally was not universally recognized as beginning the new Church Year. In fact in the Gelasian Sacramentary the five Advent Masses follow at the end of the second book after all the holy Masses and Saint Thomas Day, December 21.⁴⁷

In the fifth century, the opening date of the ecclesiastical year was the feast of the Annunciation, March 25.⁴⁸ This dating was followed in many parts of Italy, notably at the great centers of Pisa and Florence, in many cities of France, in England and at the German court.⁴⁹ In Spain the feast of the Annunciation, which marked the beginning of the Church Year for them, was transferred to December. "Following what is the practise elsewhere," says the Council of Toledo in A.D. 665, "the Annunciation will be kept throughout Spain on the eighteenth of December, since at present it falls often in Lent or in Easter."⁵⁰ As late as the thirteenth century the Annunciation still marked the beginning of the year in many parts of the Church.⁵¹

In North Africa and in Gaul the first of March marked the beginning of the year.⁵²

⁴⁷Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

⁴⁸Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 4.

⁴⁹Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

⁵⁰Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 4.

⁵¹Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1947), p. 438.

⁵²Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

At various times Easter marked the first day of the Church Year.⁵³

The Church Year has been designated both as an historical year and as a sacramental year. Advent was the beginning of the historical year and Septuagesima the beginning of the sacramental year.⁵⁴

It was an old custom at Rome to begin the new Church year with Christmas.⁵⁵ Dr. Martin Luther definitely favored beginning the year at this time. In his famous Christmas hymn, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come," he has the angels singing the following words about the new Church Year in the fifteenth stanza:

While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.⁵⁶

He begins his Hauspostille with Advent only because it belongs to the Christmas cycle.⁵⁷

It was probably not until the thirteenth century that Advent was universally recognized as beginning the Christian Year.⁵⁸ In the later

⁵³Ibid.

Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 403.

⁵⁴Pius Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heiles (Klosterneuburg, Wien: Volksliturgisches Apostolat, 1947), for a thorough discussion see the Foreword pp. 6-9.

⁵⁵Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 403.

Reed, op. cit., p. 438.

Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

⁵⁶The Lutheran Hymnal (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn #85, Stanza 15.

⁵⁷Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 219-21.

⁵⁸Reed, op. cit., p. 438.

Rietschel, op. cit., pp. 214ff. for a detailed account.

Middle Ages it became the general custom to begin all the missals, lectionaries and sermon books with Advent.⁵⁹ The texts of certain hymns also bear testimony to this at a later period:

Unter den viel spæter erscheinenden Liedern, die an 1. Advent den Beginn des Kirchenjahres ins Auge fassen, sind als erste zu nennen: „Nun kommt das neue Kirchenjahr, des freut sich alle Christenschar“ von Joh. Olearius vom Jahre 1671 und: „Auf, meine Seele, sei erfreut, das Kirchenjahr wird nun erneut.“⁶⁰

The second hymn is dated about A.D. 1711.⁶¹ Alt,⁶² speaking for the evangelical churches says:

Diesen Termin aber nahm die evangelische Kirche um so lieber an, da die von alters her fuer den vierten Sonntag vor dem Fest verordneten Perikopen nicht nur zum Beginn der Adventszeit, sondern zugleich zur Einfuehrung in ein neues Kirchenjahr vorzugsweise geeignet waren.

At present the length of Advent varies from twenty-two to twenty-eight days, depending on the day of the week in which Christmas falls. The first Sunday in Advent is therefore that Sunday which is nearest to the feast of Saint Andrew, November 30, and never comes earlier than the

⁵⁹Ibid., 217.

⁶⁰Ibid., 222.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Alt, op. cit., p. 467.

twenty-seventh of this month.⁶³

The Lutheran Hymnal of the Synodical Conference states the rubric governing the dating of Advent as follows:

The Movable Feasts and Festivals all depend upon Easter, except Advent. Advent Sunday is always the nearest Sunday to the thirtieth day of November, whether before or after.⁶⁴

⁶³Schuster, op. cit., p. 319, discusses why Roman Missal begins with Advent.

⁶⁴The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., p. 158.

Eastern Orthodox Observance

In conclusion a word might be in order about the Eastern Orthodox attitude toward the season of Advent.

The Greek Church has no marked liturgical preparation for Christmas in her liturgy.⁶⁵ As in Lent, so during the week-days of Advent, the Mass of the Presanctified is celebrated. On this day there is no Consecration and the liturgical service consists in consuming the elements consecrated or presanctified previously.⁶⁶ However, the Sunday before Christmas has a somewhat distinct liturgical character of its own.⁶⁷ The Church has observed a fast since the eighth century.⁶⁸ It begins on the Feast of Saint Philip the Apostle, November 14th, and continues for forty days.⁶⁹

Die Adventsfeier fehlt gänzlich und an ihrer Stelle findet ein vierzigstägiges Fasten von der Mitte November aus statt.⁷⁰

The fast is rigorously observed for a period of seven days and then only abstinence from meat and milk foods is required.⁷¹ They justify

⁶⁵Kellner, op. cit., p. 159

⁶⁶Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 16.

⁶⁷Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1947), p. 362.

⁶⁸Kellner, op. cit., p. 159.

⁶⁹Ibid.
Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 14.

⁷⁰Friedr. Strauss, Das evangelische Kirchenjahr in seinem Zusammenhang (Berlin: Jonas Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1850), pp. 29-30.

⁷¹Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 14.
Guerainger, op. cit., p. 27.

these relaxations by this distinction; the Lent before Christmas is, so they say, only an institution of the monks, whereas the Lent before Easter is of Apostolic institution.⁷²

The present Eastern Orthodox system of "Sundays of Matthew" and "Sundays of Luke" from Pentecost to Septuagesima are interrupted only by the celebration of the feasts of Christmas,⁷³ and certain feasts of Saints during Advent which allude to the coming birth of the Savior.⁷⁴

The Copts observe an Advent fast beginning on the 19th of Athyr, November 15th, according to the Synaxarium of Michael of Atriba.⁷⁵

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Dix, op. cit., p. 362.

⁷⁴Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 16.

⁷⁵Kellner, op. cit., p. 159.

CHAPTER II

MEANING OF THE SEASON

The Phases of the Season

The spirit of the sacred Liturgy during Advent is full of the joyful announcement of the approaching freedom: Evangelizo vobis gaudium quod erit omni populo.¹ It is a spirit of "holy enthusiasm, tender gratitude, and intense longing for the coming of the Word of God —."² Strasser³ has put it so beautifully:

We must live Advent, not merely celebrate it. We must love this season, and our life must be the expression of our innermost yearning for God's kingdom and His justice, of our burning desire for redemption and sanctity. This longing, this desire, must be re-formed, strengthened and deepened during each succeeding Advent.

Advent is not a religious romantic interlude, it is not merely a time of pleasant dreaming or soul-stirring melodies, an atmosphere of an emotional spree, made respectable by coloring it liturgically violet. Advent, to have meaning and reality, must be an 'interior orientation' of the soul, a serious desire for the Redeemer and the fulness of His grace; it must be a fertile seeking after the sovereign King who shall come to convert and renew, to redeem and enrapture, to unite most intimately to Himself individual souls and all mankind.

A dominant mood of Advent is the mood of rejoicing and joy. One can notice a certain ring of joyfulness in the church services. The

¹Ildefonso Schuster, The Sacramentary, translated from the Italian by Arthur Levelis-Marke (New York: Benziger Brother, 1924), I, 320.

²Ibid.

³Bernard Strasser, "Advent of the Soul," Orate Fratres, XVII (November 29, 1942), p. 2.

various liturgical texts and hymns give voice to a happy expectancy.

The Lutheran Hymnal, for example, provides a number of such Advent hymns: "O Bride of Christ, Rejoice,"⁴ "Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes"⁵ and "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers."⁶

This joyful aspect of Advent can be noted especially in the alleluia, "which is not dead and buried as during Lent."⁷ This is one feature which distinguishes Advent most markedly from Lent:

...the word of gladness, the joyful alleluia, is not interrupted during Advent....It is sung in the Masses of the four Sundays, and vividly contrasts with the sombre colour of the Vestments....These vestiges of joy, thus blended with the holy mournfulness of the Church, tell us, in a most expressive way, that though she unites with the ancient people of God in praying for the coming Messias, ... she does not forget that the Emmanuel is already come to her, that he is in her, and that even before she has opened her lips to ask him to save her, she has been already redeemed and predestined to an eternal union with him. This is the reason why the alleluia accompanies even her sighs, and why she seems to be at once joyous and sad, waiting for the coming of that holy night which will be brighter to her than the most sunny of days, and on which her joy will expel all her sorrow.⁸

The dramatic power of the Liturgy is unmistakably present during this

⁴The Lutheran Hymnal (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn #57.

⁵Ibid., Hymn #66.

⁶Ibid., Hymn #72.

⁷Dom Haering, "Advent," Orate Fratres, IV (December 1, 1929), p. 5.

⁸Prosper Guéranger, "Advent," The Liturgical Year, translated from the French by Laurence Shepherd, (Dublin: James Duffy, 1870), p. 37.

season. This power can be especially noticed in what has been termed the "curious joy"⁹ of Advent. The Liturgy often has its participants playing the role of those who are waiting and yearning.¹⁰ The gladness of heart is that of those who have been promised an astounding gift and are learning bit by bit the divine magnificence of it.¹¹ It has been ably demonstrated that this dramatic viewpoint is not unreal:

Are we not all ignorant even though we know much, of the stature of Him who comes? Had we lived through the long centuries of waiting in ancient Israel, and even if during those millennia we had the plenary faith which is now ours, we would still fail to appreciate His magnitude. Lacking in fact full knowledge of Him, and worse, more lacking in just appraisal and sufficient appreciation, we exhibit suitably those qualities of curiosity which qualify the human attitude in circumstances of expectant joy.¹²

"Further, the joy of Advent is audacious."¹³ A list of a few of the imperatives addressed to God during the season suggest this: "Show

⁹William J. McGarry, Ha Cometh (New York: Spiritual Book Associates, 1941), p. 11.

¹⁰For example, see the Introit and the Gradual for the First Sunday.

¹¹This is brought out especially in the Psalm, of the Introit and repeated again in the Verse, of the Gradual for the First Sunday and in the antiphon of the Introit for the Second Sunday.

¹²McGarry, op. cit., p. 11.

¹³Ibid., pp. 9-10.

no,"¹⁴ "stir up,"¹⁵ "give ear,"¹⁶ "make no tarrying,"¹⁷ and "lighten the darkness."¹⁸

Joy, however, is not the only note of Advent. There is, indeed, as time goes on an increasing note of rejoicing at the coming of the Redeemer,¹⁹ but there is also the consciousness of the sinful condition of humanity, of our own helpless condition.²⁰ The Redeemer was made necessary for us because of our sinful condition,²¹ and because of the fact that of ourselves we can do nothing deserving of merit.²²

¹⁴The Psalm of the Introit for the First Sunday.

¹⁵The opening phrase of the Collects for the First, Second and Fourth Sundays and the Gradual for the Third Sunday.

¹⁶The Psalm of the Introit for the Second Sunday and the petition of the Collect for the Third Sunday.

¹⁷The Gradual for the Fourth Sunday.

¹⁸The Collect for the Third Sunday.

¹⁹The theme of the Third Sunday is: "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice."

²⁰See the Collect for the Fourth Sunday.

²¹The Collect for the Third Sunday declares that only the Lord can "lighten the darkness of our hearts by His gracious visitation."

²²See the Collect for the Fourth Sunday.

left to ourselves we should perish miserably, and we have brought this condition upon ourselves through our own wilfull disobedience. There is, however, the great longing and expectation for deliverance, based on the consciousness of our own helpless condition together with the promise of God for our deliverance. Advent thus gives solid food for our faith in the knowledge of the consequences of sin and the coming of the Redeemer; food for the nourishing of hope in the possibility of redemption and in the knowledge of God's willingness to help us...²³

Advent appears as a time of purification and repentance, a time of preparation in order to receive worthily the gift of a Savior, God's Son.²⁴ It has always been considered a time of deep penitence.²⁵

Da diese Zeit zur bussfertigen Vorbereitung auf die Ankunft des Herrn dienen und gewissermassen das sehnsuechtige Harren der Vaster auf den Trost Israels darstellen soll, so hat sie in kirchlicher Hinsicht den Charakter bussfertiger Trauer.²⁶

The idea of repentance as a necessary preparation for the Advent of Christ is stressed repeatedly in the hymns found in the Advent section of The Lutheran Hymnal: "O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee,"²⁷ "Comfort,

²³Virgil Michel, The Liturgy of the Church (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 101.

²⁴Rodrigue Villeneuve, An Introduction to the Liturgical Year, translated from the French by J. A. Otto Wisensinger, (New York: Pustet, 1946), p. 17.

²⁵Martin Carlson, "The Church Year," Augustana Quarterly, V. 21, 2 (April, 1942), p. 116.

²⁶Heinrich Alt, Der Christliche Cultus (Berlin: G. W. F. Mueller, 1860), II. Abtheilung, p. 300.

²⁷The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #58.

Comfort, Ye My People,"²⁸ "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry,"²⁹
 "Jesus, Thy Church with Longing Eyes,"³⁰ "When Sinners See Their Lost
 Condition,"³¹ "The Advent of Our King,"³² "Arise, Sons of the Kingdom,"³³
 "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates,"³⁴ "Once He Came in Blessing,"³⁵
 and "Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Hearken."³⁶

In the early Church the idea of repentance was coupled with fasting,
 often as rigorous and severe as that of Lent.³⁷ However, the practise was

²⁸Ibid., Hymn #61.

²⁹Ibid., Hymn #63.

³⁰Ibid., Hymn #64.

³¹Ibid., Hymn #65.

³²Ibid., Hymn #68.

³³Ibid., Hymn #69.

³⁴Ibid., Hymn #73.

³⁵Ibid., Hymn #74.

³⁶Ibid., Hymn #75.

³⁷K. A. Heinrich Kellner, Heortology & History of The Christian
 Festivals From Their Origin To The Present Day, translated from the German
 by a Priest of the Diocese of Westminster (London: Kegan Paul, Trench,
 Trubner & Co., 1908), p. 158.

Alt, op. cit., p. 44.

never everywhere the same and it became, in the West, "merely a solemn time for prayer, as at present, without compulsory fasting."³⁸

The moods of joy and repentance go along side by side during the season. Advent, then, is a season of "penitential gladness because our misery is bringing to us a glorious Divine rescuer."³⁹ It seeks to cheer the sinner because the Savior will come.⁴⁰

If we take the two words cheer and sinner, it is clear that if we look long at sinner, we become doleful; if our attention is riveted on cheer - without being forgetful that we are sinners - joy can be the note of our attitude. We briefly reflect, as it were, that we are sinners, and immediately say: "Yes, but HE is on the way who will remedy all that." The great emphasis of Advent is on the sureness of our rescue and betterment.⁴¹

Advent insistently reminds us of the time before Christ and of its spiritual darkness. Mankind sat "in darkness and in the shadow of death."⁴²

³⁸W. K. Lowther Clarke, editor, Liturgy and Worship. A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), p. 246.

For a rather exhaustive statement on the evangelical Church's attitude toward regarding Advent as a period of fasting see: Th. Kliefoth, Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienst-Ordnung in den deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Destruction und Reformation (Schwerin: Still-er'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1861), Vierter Band, p. 406ff.

³⁹McGarry, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴⁰See the Gradual for the Fourth Sunday.

⁴¹McGarry, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴²Isaiah 9:2.

With this mood of Advent the season is in full agreement. Nature, with her steadily shortening days and lengthening nights, her rich coloring gone and her cold wintry days coming on, quietly and persistently recalls those dreary times before the Savior's coming.⁴³

Haering⁴⁴ points out that the missionary emphasis is definitely to be found in the Advent liturgy:

Advent makes us think also of those countries and nations, as well as of those individual souls, in whom Christ, the Sun of Justice, is not yet risen, and who today still dwell in the shadows of death, as did all men in the time before Christ. During Advent holy Church, like a loving mother, implores the Savior to come also to those souls and bestow upon them His heavenly gifts.

This missionary emphasis also appears in two of the Advent hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal*: "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"⁴⁵ and "When Sinners See Their Lost Condition."⁴⁶

Gabrol⁴⁷ says that with "the exception of Lent, this is the most remarkable and the richest of all the liturgical seasons." Within a period of four weeks it skillfully and dramatically weaves together into a harmonious pattern the moods of joy and gladness, of repentance and preparation, of longing and ardent desire, of light and of darkness.

⁴³Haering, op. cit., p. 2.

The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #64, especially stanza #2.

⁴⁴Haering, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴⁵The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #59.

⁴⁶Ibid., Hymn #65.

⁴⁷Fernand Gabrol, Liturgical Prayer Its History and Spirit, translated from the French by a Benedictine of Stanbrook (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd. 1925), p. 158.

Wenn wir nach den vielen Wochen der Nachpfingstzeit die erste Vesper vom 1. Adventssonntag singen und beten, da faellt us sofort der grosse Unterschied auf: Vorher war die Liturgie einfach, muechten, jetzt ist sie poetisch, voll Gemuet und Stimmung. Der erste Gesang: "An jenen Tagen wird Sueszigkeit trauefeln...", sagt deutlich, dass wir in eine hoffnungsfrohe, botschaftereiche Zeit treten, eine Zeit der Erwartung, Sehnsucht und Freude.⁴⁸

Advent, coming as it does at the beginning of the Christmas Cycle,⁴⁹ originally was a period of preparation for the feast of the Nativity.⁵⁰ It soon expanded to become a period of preparation for both the Nativity and the Coming at Judgment.⁵¹ Then it was further expanded to include the Coming in The Means of Grace.⁵²

⁴⁸Pius Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles (Klosterneuberg, Wien: Volksliturgisches Apostolat, 1947), p. 17.

⁴⁹Gaspar Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal (Saint Paul, Minnesota: H. M. Lohmann Co., 1949), p. 1.

⁵⁰Georg Rietschel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1900), Erster Band, "Die Adventzeit bildete sich nur allmaechlich als Vorbereitungszeit auf das Weihnachtsfest in Analogie zu der oesterlichen Quadragesimalzeit in der Kirche heraus," p. 201.

⁵¹Gabrol, op. cit., pp. 158-59.

Wilhelm Loehs, Haus - Schul - und Kirchenbuch fuer Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses (Stuttgart: S. G. Liesching, 1859), Zweiter Theil, p. 42.

Rietschel, op. cit., p. 203.

⁵²Haering, op. cit., p. 2.

Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 405.

Parsch, op. cit., p. 15.

Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 17.

At present the mood of the Advent season is usually three-fold:

We look back to the coming of the Babe of Bethlehem. We look within to His entry into our hearts. We look forward to His coming again. It might seem impossible to harbor three moods at once and bend in three directions simultaneously. Actually the mood of Advent is one bent, one yearning - to have Christ.

We look forward to His coming because we need Him to release us from the trials of this world and of our flesh. We know that He is that Liberator because He has already "redeemed us from all iniquity and purified unto Himself a peculiar people." We celebrate His entry into our hearts as we hold the story of His life and death and rising again before us in His Word.

The Lesson of Advent is that this is a Lord to want, to bend toward, to reach out for, to await with gladness and with longing, to greet as a friend whom we have not seen but who is yet always with us unto the end.⁵³

A few have even distinguished a four-fold coming. Durandus, for example, speaks of a four-fold Advent of Christ: "in carnem, in mentem, in morte cujuslibet, in majestate diei judicii."⁵⁴ This four-fold distinc-

⁵³R. R. Caemmerer, "He Came - He Comes - He Will Come," The Lutheran Witness, LXVIII, 24 (November 29, 1949), p. 388. The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #58, "O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee," develops the three-fold Advent: stanza #4 - Incarnation, stanza #5-8 - Coming in Grace, stanza #9 - Judgment; also Hymn #56.

Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947), "It is interesting to note that Lossius, the friend of Melancthon and the editor of a famous Reformation Cationale, speaks of a three-fold Advent - His Coming in the flesh, His return to Judgment, and His daily Coming in the ministrations of the Word and the Sacraments," p. 438.

⁵⁴Rietschel, op. cit., p. 203.

tion is rarely met today.⁵⁵ In fact Durandus himself reduced his four-fold division by combining the first two and the last two and speaking of only two Advents.⁵⁶

The Advent season, then, is to prepare us, first of all, for Christ's Coming as the Babe of Bethlehem to redeem us. The hymn: "Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Harkon," reflects this mood:

Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus,
Turn not from me aside,
And grant that I receive Thee
This blessed Advent-tide.
From stall and manger low
Come Thou to dwell within me;
Loud praises will I sing Thee
And forth Thy glory show.⁵⁷

The references in the Advent Liturgy to the First and Second Coming of our Lord will be discussed in detail in the section dealing with the Propers of the season.

From early times the eschatological mood of Advent was a dominant one. It was regarded as a time to think about and prepare for the last hours of life and the Judgment.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Kliefoth, op. cit., has an excellent discussion on this, pointing out that in reality there are only three Comings, pp. 405-06.

⁵⁶Rietschel, op. cit., p. 203.

⁵⁷The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #75, stanza #4.

⁵⁸Maering, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵⁹The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., "The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us," #67; "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night," #71.

Discussing the latter emphasis, Parsch⁵⁹ says:

Bisher war uns der Advent nicht eindeutig klar; wir unterschieden eine dreifache Ankunft Christi: die erste in der Menschwerdung, die zweite in der Wiederkunft, die dritte in der Gnade. Die erste kann man nicht mehr vorbereiten, da sie vorbei ist, die zweite war in unseren Augen so verblasst, dass man es kaum wagte, in der Adventzeit von ihr zu sprechen. So stuerzten wir uns auf die dritte und machten den Advent zur Vorbereitung der Ankunft Christi in der Gnade.

Hein, so war es nicht. Der Advent war nicht anderes als die Fortsetzung des kirchlichen Herbstes, eine vertiefte Vorbereitung auf die Wiederkunft Christi. Und die zwei Weihnachtsfeste, besonders die Erscheinung Christi, sind ein erhabenes Paradiesfest Christi.

The Holy Gospel for the Second Sunday in Advent is the account of the signs of the last things (Saint Luke 21: 25-36);⁶⁰ and the fourth antiphon of the Advent psalmody⁶¹ is a direct reference to the final coming of Christ with all the saints. The ancient hymn, Vox clara ecce intonat,⁶² contains a strong eschatological emphasis.

The famous fourteenth-century sequence, Dies irae, dies illa, before it was taken into the Office of the Dead, was sung before the Holy Gospel of the First Sunday⁶³ to prepare the minds of the hearers

⁵⁹Parsch, op. cit., p. 9.

Loehs, op. cit., has a beautiful section p. 42.

⁶⁰The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., p. 54.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 95; also see the Roman Breviary, First Responory of Matins for the First Sunday.

⁶²Ibid., Hymn #60.

⁶³That Gospel is read on the Second Sunday in the Lutheran and Anglican Churches. The historic reason for this change will be discussed later in the chapter.

for the awful narrative of the final catastrophe described by Saint Luke.⁶⁴ Cabrol⁶⁵ maintains that it was originally intended for the First Sunday in Advent. Parsch⁶⁶ feels that it still belongs with this Gospel rather than in the Requiem Mass.

This strong Advent emphasis on the Judgment is brought out in a poem written for the Advent season by the famous Anglican churchman, Keble:⁶⁷

So each holy season is welcome as it comes;
And, with special emphasis, this holy season of
Advent.
Of what it is the token, you know—
Of the coming of our Lord.
If you believe anything, you believe that He will
come,
To be our Judge.
Just consider — that He will come.
Who? The Lord.
What avel what wonder!

We might conclude our discussion of the three-fold mood of Advent with Gueranger:⁶⁸

Let us now listen to the explanation of this threefold visit of Christ, given to us by Peter of Blois, in his third Sermon de Adventu: "There are three Comings of our Lord; the first in the flesh, the second in the soul, the third at the judgment. The first was at midnight, according to those words of the Gospel: At midnight there

⁶⁴Schuster, op. cit., p. 323.

⁶⁵Cabrol, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶⁶Parsch, op. cit., p. 24.

⁶⁷John Keble, Outlines of Instructions or Meditations for the Church's Seasons (Oxford & London: Parker & Co., 1885), p. 1.

⁶⁸Gueranger, op. cit., pp. 31-2.

was a cry made, Lo the Bride-groom cometh! But this first coming is long since past, for Christ has been seen on the earth and has conversed among men. We are now in the second Coming, provided only we are such as that he may thus come to us; for he has said that if we love him, he will come unto us and will take up his abode with us. So that this second coming is full of uncertainty to us; for who, save the Spirit of God, knows them that are of God? They that are raised out of themselves by the desire of heavenly things, know indeed when he comes; but whence he cometh, or wither he goeth, they know not. As for the third Coming, it is most certain that it will be, most uncertain when it will be; for nothing is more sure than death, and nothing less sure than the hour of death. When they shall say peace and security, says the Apostle, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as the rains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape. So that the first coming was humble and hidden, the second is mysterious and full of love, the third will be majestic and terrible. In his first coming, Christ was judged by men unjustly; in the second he renders us just by his grace; in his third, he will judge all things with justice. In his first, a Lamb; in his last, a Lion; in the one between the two, the tenderest of Friends.

Not a few liturgical scholars have seen a three-fold preparation for Christ's Advent on the part of God, too.⁶⁹ First there is the entire unfolding of God's plan of Salvation in the Old Testament through the mouth of the prophets. Secondly there is the Way-preparer who came in the fulness of time to announce the coming of Christ. And the third is the temple of "costly stones which the Father built for His Son, the body and soul of the Mother of God."⁷⁰

Isaiah is presented to us as the speaker and representative of the Old Testament. He qualifies so beautifully as a way-preparer because he

⁶⁹For example: Cabrol, Michel, Parsch, Strasser.

⁷⁰Parsch, op. cit., p. 18.

presents the message of God and the longing of man for the Deliverer.⁷¹

During the Advent season the whole Old Testament passes in review as we think especially of the Messianic prophecies.⁷² Starting at the very beginning with the first dim revelation, always clearer and clearer, we see God revealing the Messiah to us. From the protocospel at the very gates of Paradise, through Noah, Abraham, Jacob's blessing, Moses, David, through all the prophets to the prince of them - Isaiah.⁷³ The Church does this to adequately prepare us for the feast of Christmas. During Advent Christ the Savior becomes ever clearer so that at Christmas we truly appreciate why He came, comes, and is coming.⁷⁴ Isaiah is singled out as the Old Testament Evangelist because he presents the clearest prophetic picture of the Savior.

Saint John the Baptist is the second way-preparer.⁷⁵ Parsch⁷⁶

⁷¹Parsch, op. cit., p. 18.

The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #61.

⁷²See "The Advent Wreath" in the chapter on Advent Customs.

⁷³Michel, op. cit., pp. 107-08.

⁷⁴Parsch, op. cit., pp. 18-9.

⁷⁵Gabrol, op. cit., points out that the position assigned to Saint John the Baptist in the liturgical year is of the utmost importance. On June 24, the feast of his birthday divides the year into two sections, and heralds the festival of Christmas, six months before the event. For this reason the season was at one time called the "Summer Christmas," p. 16.

⁷⁶Parsch, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

says that the more he studies the person of Saint John the Baptist the more convinced he is that Saint John belongs to the Advent season. His life, his words, and his person are a preparation for the coming of Christ. God made him a herald and way-preparer for the first Coming of Christ; the Church makes him the herald and way-preparer of Christ's Coming in Grace. His message to the Jews was: Behold, the kingdom of God is at hand." They were to put an end to their sins and repent. He does the same in the Liturgy for us. His words addressed to us mean that repentance is a necessary preparation.⁷⁷ He is the last and greatest of the prophets, the Precursor who "actually pointed out Christ as the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world."⁷⁸

Ever since the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, when the dogma of the Blessed Virgin's divine Maternity was declared, Advent has given her a position of honor.⁷⁹ Parsch⁸⁰ says:

Können wir es jetzt verstehen, wenn uns die Mutter
Kirche mit Maria und aus dem Herzen Mariens durch den

⁷⁷Bernard Strasser, With Christ Through the Year (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 64-70.

⁷⁸Gabrol, op. cit., pp. 16-20.
The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #63.

⁷⁹Gabrol, op. cit., p. 16ff.
Michel, op. cit., pp. 107-08.
Strasser, With Christ Through the Year, pp. 64-70.

⁸⁰Parsch, op. cit., p. 20.

Advent gehen laesst? Wenn der Advent auch eine Vorbe-
reitung auf die Gnadenskunft Christi ist, wer kann wohl
da ein besseres Vorbild sein als Maria, die den Herrn
leibhaftig aufnahm, beherbergte und ihm wahre Mutter sein
durfte! Ja, das Geheimnis der Gottesmutterchaft, das
hoechste Symbol unserer Gotteinswohnung und Gnade muss
einen breiten Raum im Advent einnehmen.

The Propers of the Season

Perhaps before turning to the study of the individual Sundays in Advent, a few words may be said about the Propers.

The Introits and Graduals of the Advent season in The Lutheran Hymnal are the historic propers of the ancient Church which were retained by the Church of the Augsburg Confession.⁸¹

The Lutheran Church also retained the historic Advent Collects, which appear in The Lutheran Hymnal.⁸²

The Advent Collects have often been called Excita collects because three out of the four begin with the Latin excita.⁸³ The prayers are in the fine Roman classic style, "distinguished by its reticence, by its perfect balance of antithetic phrase in faultless rhythm, occasionally rhymed; but in this setting there is generally one outstanding thought, which gives a pleasing summary of the mystery of the feast."⁸⁴

The Collects of the four Sundays have two things in common:

From Sunday to Sunday they mark a new progression toward the horizon where Christ will appear. As we proceed, the light is growing brighter, and its glow spreads its increasing

⁸¹Reed, op. cit., p. 429.

⁸²The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., pp. 54-5.

⁸³Paul Zeller Strodach, The Collect for the Day (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1939), pp. 25-34.

Joachim Beckmann, et al. Der Gottesdienst An Sonn-Und Feiertagen. Untersuchungen zur Kirchenagenda I, 1, (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), p. 298.

⁸⁴Cabrol, op. cit., p. 23.

radiance on all sides. That is to say, we shall find in all the collects the same unique thought, but gradually more intensely expressed.

Secondly, contrary to the general rule observed in the composition of the collects, those of Advent are directly addressed to Christ Himself. One might account for this departure from tradition with a historic reason, for these collects are of more recent date. But the antiquity of the Advent liturgy itself permits us to discard this as an exclusive explanation.⁸⁵

Vitry⁸⁶ goes on to say that no doubt a psychological reason is a more satisfactory explanation. During the four weeks of Advent, the Church will reflect chiefly on the central events of Christ's life through which mankind is restored to God's family. Therefore:

It is logical that the whole intent of the liturgy of Advent should thus be to direct the outlook of the faithful towards Him who is to accomplish this sublime restoration of man to God. To that end, the liturgical prayer arouses, now an almost presumptuous confidence, now a repentant compunction. Is it then surprising that the cry of the children of God should rise from their distress towards Him who was promised from the beginning, who was long expected, and who is now at hand in the sacred mystery of the Advent liturgy? Does not man indeed constantly appeal to his liberator when in the throes of peril?⁸⁷

The Gospels and Epistles are of sixteenth-century Lutheran origin based on the usage at Rome, perhaps in the time of Gregory the Great.

⁸⁵Ermin Vitry, "The Collects of The Season," Grate Fratres. XX (December 30, 1945), pp. 21-2.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.
Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 27.

A.D. 590-604.⁸⁸ They were contained in the so-called Gones ascribed to Jerome but are probably later than his time.⁸⁹ Alcuin corrected the series of Lessons for Charlemagne and the latter made it the basis for the Homilies which he caused to be prepared in his realm.⁹⁰

After a number of changes, the Roman Catholic Church finally unified and stabilized its Use at the Council of Trent. The Lutheran and Anglican liturgies, with few exceptions, follow the older Use of Charlemagne's time and later.⁹¹

Dr. Martin Luther in his Kirchenpostille did not use the pericopal system of the Roman Missal but used the Homiliarium of Charlemagne. This system became the basis for preaching in the German Church.⁹²

The major difference between the Roman and Lutheran systems is that the Roman Church pushed ahead the Gospels for the Second, Third and Fourth Sundays in Advent and interchanged the Epistles for the Third and Fourth Sundays. It has been supposed that this was done to establish a parallel between the Third Sunday in Advent and the Fourth Sunday in Lent.⁹³

⁸⁸Reed, op. cit., p. 430.

⁸⁹Gones means "Companion to the Sacramentary."

⁹⁰Reed, op. cit., p. 430. He also relates the history of subsequent changes.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Rietschel, op. cit., p. 229.

⁹³Alt, op. cit., pp. 143-171.

Reed, op. cit., p. 438.

Adolph Spaeth, "The Pericopes," Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association, IV (Pittsburgh: The Lutheran Liturgical Association, 1906), pp. 47-66.

TABLE 19⁴

Chart of Advent Lessons

First Sunday	Epistle	Gospel
Lutheran	Rom. 13: 11-14	Matt. 21: 1-9
Roman	<u>Ibid.</u>	Luke 21: 25-33
Anglican	Rom. 13: 8-14	Matt. 13: 1-13
Second Sunday		
Lutheran	Rom. 15: 4-13	Luke 21: 25-36
Roman	<u>Ibid.</u>	Matt. 11: 2-10
Anglican	<u>Ibid.</u>	Luke 21: 25-33
Third Sunday		
Lutheran	1 Cor. 4: 1-5	Matt. 11: 2-10
Roman	Phil. 4: 4-7	John 1: 19-28
Anglican	1 Cor. 4: 1-5	Matt. 11: 2-10
Fourth Sunday		
Lutheran	Phil. 4: 4-7	John 1: 19-28
Roman	1 Cor. 4: 1-5	Luke 3: 1-6
Anglican	Phil. 4: 4-7	John 1: 19-28

⁹⁴Based on Reed, op. cit., pp. 438-440.

TABLE 2⁹⁵

Lessons as Contained in the Homiliarium of Charlemagne and the
Edition of the Comes of Jerome by Pamelius

Sunday	<u>Homiliarium</u>	Pamelius (<u>Comes</u>)
First	Matt. 21, 1sqg.	Rom. 13, 11sqg. Matt. 21, 1sqg.
Second	Luke 21, 25sqg.	Rom. 15, 4sqg. Luke 21, 25sqg.
Third	Matt. 9, 2sqg.	1 Cor. 4, 1sqg. Luke 11, 2sqg.
Fourth	John 1, 19sqg. Mark 1, 1sqg.	Phil. 4, 3sqg. John 1, 19sqg.

⁹⁵Spaeth, op. cit., adapted from a list on pp. 59-60.

TABLE 396

Advent Pericopal Calendar

Manuale Ministrorum Ecclesiae

Sunday	Gospel	Epistle
First	Matt. 21	Rom. 13
Second	Iac. 21	Rom. 15
Third	Matt. 11	1 Cor. 4
Fourth	John 1	Phil. 4

⁹⁶Felix Biedenbach, Manuale Ministrorum Ecclesiae (Tuebingen: Georgen, 1603), the Calendar on p. 1.

The Sundays in the Season

The First Sunday in Advent⁹⁷

Introit

Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul: O my God,
 I trust in Thee.
 Let me not be ashamed: let not mine enemies tri-
 umph over me.
 Yea, let none that wait on Thee: be ashamed.
Psalm. Show me Thy ways, O Lord: teach me Thy paths.

Collect

Stir up, we beseech Thee, Thy power, O Lord, and come,
 that by Thy protection we may be rescued from the
 threatening perils of our sins and saved by Thy mighty
 deliverance; who livest and reignest with the Father
 and the Holy Ghost, over one God, world without end.

Epistle

Rom. 13: 11-14

Gradual

All they that wait on Thee shall not be ashamed,
 O Lord.
Verses. Show me Thy ways, O Lord: teach me Thy paths.
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
 V. Show us Thy mercy, O Lord: and grant us Thy sal-
 vation. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Matt. 21: 1-9

This Sunday, the first of the ecclesiastical year, is called,

⁹⁷The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., p. 54.

in the chronicles and charts of the Middle Ages, ad te levavi Sunday, from the first words of the Introit; or, Agniciens a longe, from the first words of one of the Responsories of Matins.⁹⁸ It has also been called the Dominica principalis.⁹⁹

The antiphon of the Introit is formed of the first verses of Psalm 25. Johner¹⁰⁰ points out that in cases of this kind the verse which immediately follows generally supplies the psalm-verse for the Introit. Here, however, the fourth has been chosen, the preceding verse having been passed by, most likely because it expresses the same thought as its predecessors.

The Introit gives eloquent expression to the feelings of humanity, cast down, yet full of hope, and begs the Savior to bring it back into the path which leads to Bethlehem.¹⁰¹

As the Church begins a new Year of Grace it expresses the spirit in which it wishes to enter that year: "Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my

⁹⁸Guéranger, op. cit., p. 127.
Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 19.

⁹⁹Friedr. Strauss, Das evangelische Kirchenjahr in seinem Zusammenhange (Berlin: Jonas Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1850), p. 86.

¹⁰⁰Dominic Johner, The Shants of The Vatican Gradual, translated from the German by the monks of Saint John's Abbey (Collegeville, Minnesota: Saint John's Abbey Press, 1940), p. 14.

¹⁰¹Schuster, op. cit., p. 321.

soul: O my God, I trust in Thee;".¹⁰² It is a confessing prayer voiced by the faithful: a complete dependance on God, an absolute child-like trust in Him for help and deliverance from all enemies. God wants to free our souls from the foes that press it from every side, from enemies who think they can already rejoice at our defeat.¹⁰³ Seeing the year ahead yet to be traversed, the Church sings: "Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths."

The Collect is a typical Advent collect beginning with the Exulta. In comparison to the peaceful, flowing collects of the Trinity season, it may well be called a stormy collect.¹⁰⁴

Standing at the portal of a new year, the first prayer of the year looks ahead through all its coming days. It is praying for that victory which already has been won. But it is praying that that victory may be won in us now, daily, throughout all our time.¹⁰⁵

The Collect is addressed to Christ as a maranatha Jesu. He should come quickly to save us from our sins.¹⁰⁶ It has been interpreted (?) thus:

Against the threatening perils of our sins, ye who commit them, have no protection, unless HE stir up His power and save us - Therefore the cry to HIM ... "the Son of God, who

¹⁰²Paul Zeller Strodach, The Church Year (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1924), pp. 25-6.

¹⁰³Johner, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁰⁴Parsch, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁰⁵Strodach, The Collect for the Day, pp. 25-6.

¹⁰⁶Parsch, op. cit., p. 24.

loved me, and gave himself for me." -- Who has taken His power and reigns!¹⁰⁷

It is felt that the Epistle is, in a sense, an instructing answer to the Holy Gospel. The contrast is drawn between the night far spent and the day close at hand, between darkness and light. Against the threatening perils which surround us, we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁸

The story of Time is impressed by the Epistle. It is deeply earnest for "the night is far spent, the Day is at hand."¹⁰⁹ For this we need wakefulness, watchfulness. Here again, God-granted opportunity is spread before us, and instruction how to grasp and use it; for He Who has come will come again. Time passes, the Day nears -- "Behold, thy Salvation cometh!"¹¹⁰

In the Gradual, therefore, we sing and pray with utmost fervor:

"Show me Thy ways, O Lord." And when we consider the many ways in which the human heart can go astray, the many paths not illumined by the light of truth, then shall we begin to share the motherly solicitude of the Church, and from the bottom of our hearts we shall sing and pray: "teach me Thy paths."¹¹¹

Johner¹¹² comments on the Alleluia verse of the Gradual:

Ever since the first sin was committed, this cry has been ascending almost ceaselessly to heaven: "Show us, O Lord, thy

¹⁰⁷Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 26.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 28-9.

¹⁰⁹The Epistle for the day.

¹¹⁰Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 29.
Beckmann, op. cit., p. 127.

¹¹¹Johner, op. cit., p. 16.

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 16-7.

mercy!" And never is it uttered in vain. The riches of divine mercy are infinite, inexhaustible. But men wish to see God's mercy, to feel it, to touch it bodily. Incarnate Mercy came to this earth when the only-begotten Son of God became man. His merciful love urges Him to seek that which was lost, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal wounded hearts, to speak that divinely effective word: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." Lord, come Thou again into our hearts, into the hearts of all men, work the marvels of Thy forgiving love, and grant us Thy salvation! Such is the heartfelt supplication of this Advent song.

The Gospel for the First Sunday recalls the words of prophecy, "Thy King cometh," and its fulfillment in our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem on His way to the cross, "whose centrality in God's plan of redemption is thus recognized at the very beginning of the Christian year."¹¹³

This Holy Gospel, the same one used to open the solemnities of Holy Week, here opens the weeks of joyous Advent anticipation. This is the only Holy Gospel which is read twice in the course of one liturgical year. Strauss¹¹⁴ feels that there is a definite analogy. The basis for this analogy can be found by the projection of the entrance of which the Palm Sunday Gospel speaks to the First Sunday in Advent. For a long time during the Middle Ages the Easter Festival marked the opening of a new Church Year. The Palm Sunday Gospel of Christ's entry into Jerusalem marked the opening of the Holy Week passion of our Lord. At a later date the Christmas Festival became the festival which opened the new year. And of course with it went its period of preparation, the Advent season. Therefore, the same Holy Gospel was read on the First Sunday in Advent to show that Christmas was a "Vorostern" and that the organic unity of the year was

¹¹³Head, op. cit., pp. 438-9.

¹¹⁴Strauss, op. cit., pp. 82-3.

preserved by still beginning it with the same Gospel. On Palm Sunday that Gospel is historical, on the First Sunday in Advent it is a type or allegory. It shows that at the beginning of the year we must make sure that the whole year will be a coming of Jesus to us. Coming as it does in between the death and resurrection of Christ and His Second Coming on Judgment Day (Holy Gospel of the twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity), this entrance of Christ into Jerusalem can be seen as His coming into our hearts and a picture of the eternal Wedding feast in the heavenly Jerusalem above.

Alt¹¹⁵ puts it this way:

In der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche wusste man alle Schwierigkeiten durch allegorische und typische Deutung zu beseitigen. Der Einzug Christi in Jerusalem wurde aufgefasst als Sinnbild seines Kommens in unser Herz, und demgemäss theils die Art und Weise, wie er kommt (ein Koenig, sanftmuethig und friedfertig), theils der Zweck seines Kommens erortert, waehrend der von Seiten des Volkes ihm bereitete festliche Empfang sehr einfach zur Betrachtung der Frage fuehrte: Wie sollen wir ihn empfangen?

This same theme can be seen in a number of the hymns in The Lutheran

Hymnal: "O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee,"¹¹⁶ "Arise, Sons of the Kingdom,"¹¹⁷

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates,"¹¹⁸ "O Bride of Christ, Rejoice,"¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵Alt. op. cit., p. 467.

¹¹⁶The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., Hymn #58.

¹¹⁷Ibid., Hymn #69.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Hymn #73.

¹¹⁹Ibid., Hymn #57, especially stanzas 6 and 7.

"Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come."¹²⁰

The Second Sunday in Advent¹²¹

Introit

Daughter of Zion: behold, thy Salvation cometh.
The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard:
and ye shall have gladness of heart.
Ps. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel: Thou that leadest
Joseph like a flock.

Collect

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of
Thine only-begotten Son, so that by His coming we may
be enabled to serve Thee with pure minds; through the
same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

Rom. 15: 4-13

Gradual

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined:
our God shall come.
V. Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have
made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!
V. The powers of heaven shall be shaken: and then shall
they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with
power and great glory. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Luke 21: 25-36

In the evangelical churches this Sunday is often referred to as the

¹²⁰Ibid., Hymn #55, especially stanzas 3 and 4.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 54.

Sunday of the Epiphany of our Lord as Judge.¹²²

The ancient prophecies in the Introit are purely Messianic, but in their use here there is a sweet meaning to the Daughter of Zion to whom Salvation has come, who has heard the Voice and whose heart is glad.¹²³

Parsch says:¹²⁴

Der Einzug ist ein Heroldsruf: Gottesvolk (das sind wir), siehe, der Herr wird kommen, den Heiden des Heil zu bringen. Der Herr lässt seine herrliche Stimme erschallen zur Freude eures Herzens. Also eine freudige Ankuendigung des kommenden Erlösers. Es liegt in diesem Introitus ein herrlicher Aufritt aller Heilswunder der kommenden Gnadenzeiten: Weihnachten ist nur Anfang. Der Herr lässt seine Stimme erschallen von der Krippe, von Kreuz, aus seinem Grabe, durch den Hl. Geist und durch die Posaune am Juengsten Tage; ja jeden Sonntag wird er durch das Gotteswort der Messe seine herrliche Stimme erschallen lassen zur Freude unseres Herzens. Der Psalm 79, der der Leitpsalm dieser Messe ist, ist freilich, viel ernster gehalten, klingt aber in Kehrvers in sehnsuechtiges Verlangen nach Wiederherstellung der Gottes-herrschaft aus.

It has been said that in the Psalm, of the Introit the goodness of the divine Shepherd is extolled. He looks on each of our souls as a sheep most dear to Him, so dear, indeed, that He will feed it with His own flesh.¹²⁵

The Collect is a perfect gem of liturgical perfection. "Whoever the Ancient was whose heart moved him so deeply to pray the Little Prayer, which we now have for the Second Sunday in Advent, he must have been balancing up his life in the light of the Sending of God's Good Gift and the

¹²²Strauss, op. cit., p. 87.

¹²³Strodach, The Church Year, p. 31.

¹²⁴Parsch, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

¹²⁵Guoranger, op. cit., pp. 169-70.

Coming.¹²⁶ to ask him what he had done since he had received the gift. "When we use this Little Prayer today, we are using the fruit of his soul experience; we are putting ourselves in his place; not simply using his words!"¹²⁷

For the first time the words: "make ready the way of Thine only-begotten Son," appear. It is a theme which will not be silenced for the rest of the season.¹²⁸

Reed¹²⁹ feels that the Epistle is not closely related to the Gospel and was probably carried over from a lectio continua reading of Romans.

Parsch¹³⁰ attempts to show the relation of the Epistle to the theme of the Introit and to the coming Christmas celebration:

Die Epistel beginnt mit einem scheinbar fremden Gedanken ueber den Nutzen der Kl. Schrift; geht dann ueber in die Mahnung zur Eintracht der Christen untereinander; diese Eintracht begruendet der Apostel mit der Tatsache, dass Christus die zwei getrennten Menschengruppen, Juden und Heiden, zum Glauben berufen hat, die Juden auf Grund der Verheissungen, die Heiden aus reiner Barmherzigkeit. Bei dieser Berufung der Heiden verweilt der Heidenapostel. Die Epistel klingt aus in ein Adventgebet: "Der Gott der Hoffnung erfuelle euch mit Freude und Frieden im Glauben, auf dass ihr ueberstromet von Hoffnung und von der Kraft des Kl. Geistes"; ein wunderbares Wort, in dem alle Gueter des Christentums vereint sind (das ist gleich ein Beispiel seiner sphaerlichen Stimmen"). Also reiche Quelle des Gottesreiches soll uns der Gnadenstrom zu Weihnachten bringen.

When the Lord will come, He will bring joy to the hearts of men, that

¹²⁶Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 29.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Parsch, op. cit., p. 27.

¹²⁹Reed, op. cit., p. 439.

¹³⁰Parsch, op. cit., p. 29.

is the promise of the Introit. The Epistle closed with similar words: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."¹³¹ This thought is prolonged by the Gradual. It speaks of the beauty of Him Who is to come, our God Who will surely come.

He does not come alone. A great host will be there to greet Him. Of this the Gradual verse speaks. When He comes, a great host will also accompany Him.¹³² This has been interpreted to mean that when He comes at Christmastide, the saints who have sealed the covenant with the sacrifice of their blood will surround His cradle, St. Stephen, St. John, the Holy Innocents. But the full grandeur of these words of the Gradual will be realized only at the end of the world. When the angel's trumpet will sound, then both the wicked and the just will arise. The saints will rise who have sealed their covenant with God by blood, by loyalty to the end, frequently by a martyr's bloody death. Now they all come to form the radiant retinue of the Savior. However enchanting this prospect may be, God, the eternal Sun, infinite Beauty, of Whom the saints are but reflections, will appear infinitely more glorious and resplendent.¹³³

The Alleluia verse was used as the processional song of the neo-

¹³¹Romans 15:13.

¹³²The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., antiphon 4, p. 95.

¹³³Johner, op. cit., p. 23.

phytes each day during Easter Week as they were led to the baptismal font.¹³⁴

The number of verses to be read in today's Holy Gospel is not everywhere the same.¹³⁵

Strauss¹³⁶ sees a relation between this Holy Gospel reading and that of the twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity:

Das Evangelium am Sonntage der Zukunft handelt von den Zeichen des jüngsten Tages, Luk. 21, 25-36. Es steht in genauem Zusammenhange mit dem vom 26sten Trinitatis, aber was dort Befruchtung am Ende ist, erscheint hier am Anfange als Verheissung; aber der vorletzte und der zweite Sonntag des Kirchenjahres greifen in einander und hangen vorbereitend an dem Letzten und entwickelnd an dem Ersten.

The Second Sunday in Advent completes the teaching of the First Sunday. This Holy Gospel tells of His Second Coming, His Advent to Judgment, in glory. It has been said that the object is to tell us of the beginning of our Savior's earthly life and the heavenly completion of our redeemed life; to show us how quietly, how simply, and yet how irresistibly God develops and unfolds His eternally planned purpose, and also how wonderfully and majestically He completes it; to show us that in the Divine Plan there is no beginning, can be no beginning, without its ending, no plan without its purpose, no prophecy without its fulfill-

¹³⁴Johner, op. cit., p. 25.

Villeneuve, op. cit., pp. 22-3. This article on the Stational Churches will shed much light on the references to Jerusalem in the Propers.

¹³⁵The Roman Church reads St. Luke 21: 25-33 (on the First Sunday); the Anglican Church reads the same Gospel on the Second Sunday. Beckmann, op. cit., also uses the same number of verses in his Lutheran Agenda, p. 128.

¹³⁶Strauss, op. cit., p. 87.

ment without its enjoyment, no time without its eternity, no faith without its fruition, no Savior without His saved. And as the Church teaches today that the First Coming cannot be considered save as it finds its completion in the Second; no more can the Second unless it be considered as it traces its origin, its cause, to the First. God sends His Son into the world. The King comes and may be rejected, but He comes again and must be received. Through His humiliation He enters into His glory; He comes again "with power and great glory" to complete that which He has done in His humiliation. The First Advent, historic fact, lies behind us; the Second lies before. Is this not another reason why Advent must be a season of penitence, preparation and humble prayer?¹³⁷

The Third Sunday in Advent¹³⁸

Introit

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.
Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord
is at hand.

Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer
and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests
be made known unto God.

Eg. Lord, Thou hast been favorable unto Thy land;
Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

Collect

Lord, we beseech Thee, give ear to our prayers and
lighten the darkness of our hearts by Thy gracious
visitation; who livest, etc.

¹³⁷Strodach, The Church Year, pp. 30-1.

¹³⁸The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., pp. 54-5.

Epistle

1 Cor. 4: 1-5

Gradual

Thou that dwellest between the cherubin, shine forth:
stir up Thy strength and come.

V. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel: Thou that leadest
Joseph like a flock. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

V. Stir up Thy strength and come and save us.
Hallelujah!

Gospel

Matt. 11: 2-10

This Sunday is called Gaudete, from the first word of the Introit:

"Gaudete in Domino semper..."¹³⁹

It has been frequently pointed out by liturgical scholars that this Sunday is supposed to correspond in character to the Fourth Sunday in Lent, Inaetate. On that Sunday the austerity of Lent is somewhat relieved with what might be called a "liturgical smile."¹⁴⁰ The people are summoned to spiritual joy, the chant is more cheerful, rose-colored vestments are used, flowers adorn the altar, the organ is heard.¹⁴¹ What is done in mid-Lent is also done in mid-Advent or the Third Sunday because the Lord is now so near.¹⁴² Formerly, the Gloria in excelsis.

¹³⁹Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁴⁰Villeneuve, op. cit. p. 25.

¹⁴¹Ibid., pp. 25-6.

¹⁴²Gueranger, op. cit., p. 206.

pre-eminently the Christmas hymn, was sung on this day.¹⁴³ As children of the Christ-child we can hardly restrain our joy. We can wait no longer to shout with joy because He is almost here. This Sunday is full of the anticipated Christmas joy.¹⁴⁴

The principal theme or leitmotiv is: "The Lord is already near, come, let us adore."¹⁴⁵

The antiphon of the Introit is unusual in that it is taken from the New Testament (Phil. 4: 4-6) rather than from the Old Testament.

It has been pointed out that this text:

.....ist der Hauptteil der spaeteren Lesung zum 4. Advent. Die Ueberlieferung ist von Rh bis MR voelling einheitlich. Nur in Psalm sind Schwankungen. Rh hat v. ps. 84,2: "Benedixisti Domine!" dem auch die spaetere Tradition gefolgt ist. SG dagegen hat: "Cantat Domino", N₂ sogar: "Mit rex Dei" (d.h. die Fortsetzung von Phil.4).¹⁴⁶

Today's Introit sums up the character and spirit of the day:

"Rejoice." This joy has been characterized by Johner¹⁴⁷ as a joy that

¹⁴³Gabrol, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁴⁴Parach, op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁴⁵The Invitatory for the Venite at Matins on the Third and Fourth Sunday is: Prope est iam Dominus, venite adoremus.
Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁴⁶Beckmann, op. cit., p. 214. The key: Rh - Antiphonar von Rheinau. Entstand dem 8. Jahrhundert; MR - das nachtridentinische Missale Romanum; SG - Antiphon. Miss. St. Greg. St. Gall. aus dem 10. Jahrhundert; N₂ - Miss. Romanum Mediolani, 1474.

¹⁴⁷Johner, op. cit., p. 23.

has in mind the beautiful Babe of Bethlehem who "is near at hand," who out of pure love for us appeared in utter poverty and took on the weakness of an infant, though He is infinitely rich and mighty. The joy in this song, therefore, sinks into the heart slowly, sweetly, like gentle dew from heaven. Since the Lord is nigh, we are exhorted to be: (1) joyous, (2) modest and friendly, (3) without solicitude, (4) persevering in confiding prayer. A model Advent program.

The Collect reaches into the heart of the Advent purpose: "of the Sending of the Son into the world; of the darkness of the Cross and the glorious New Light of the Resurrection, - all because of, and to dispel, the darkness of our hearts."¹⁴⁸

The Collect uses the "Nature-Motiv" of Night and Light.¹⁴⁹

It has been felt that the English translation "Lord, give ear" does not do justice to the Latin original of the Collect. Strodach¹⁵⁰ says:

We are all familiar with the use of "Incline thine ear," which really means bend over, down, to me; as a father so often bends down to his little one to hear his plea. That very attitude testifies of love; and imagine the

¹⁴⁸Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 33.

¹⁴⁹Parach, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁵⁰Strodach, The Collect for the Day, pp. 31-2.

child's face looking up toward the bending down! But there is still more. It also means "fit," "adapt"; yes, exactly! adapt Thy hearing to my praying. Whisper, sigh; hesitant, weak; plea, cry; the faintest murmur of my soul or the strength of courageous faith, - whatever it be, "adapt" Thy listening! "attend to the voice of my supplications." Almighty, Infinite, Creative Word adapt Thy hearing to me, a child in weakness, in daily wrongdoing, in sore need, in failure and folly; yet looking up, still clinging, still praying, "accommodate" (that's it literally) Thine ear to me.

The Epistle strikes a clear Advent note in verse five.

The reference to "the ministers of Christ" and their work of preparing men for the Second Advent made it an appropriate selection for the Ember-tide Ordinations.¹⁵¹ Alt's¹⁵² words are particularly significant:

Die Epistel 1 Cor. 4, 1-5 handelt von den Verwaltern des christlichen Predigtantes als Christi Dienern und Haushaltern ueber Gottes Geheimnisse und ihrer Pflicht, treu zu sein in ihren Beruf, das Urtheil darueber aber nicht von Menschen zu erwarten, sondern dem Herrn anheim zu stellen, - hier jedenfalls zunachst im Anschluss an Johannes d. T. als das hohe Vorbild fuer alle, die den Beruf haben, Andere Christo zuzufuehren, und ihn den Weg zu bahnen in ihre Herzen.

The Gradual is a "Sehnsuchtsruf nach Erloesung, ein: 'Taufet Himmel' der unerloesten und erloesten Menschheit.., er ist aber auch ein 'Maranatha', ein Parusiegebet."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹Reed, op. cit., p. 440.
See Chapter on Ember Days.

¹⁵²Alt, op. cit., pp. 468-9.

¹⁵³Parach, op. cit., p. 32.

The present Gradual verse with its fervent Advent petition, which formed the first part of the Collect of the First Sunday in Advent,¹⁵⁴ resembles most closely the suppliant character of the Gradual verse on Pentecost Sunday.¹⁵⁵

A kind of daring, added to a deep faith, breathes from this supplication. Though it does not express the anxiety, akin to despondency, which seized the disciples when the Lord slept during the storm on the lake, it does state, with unmistakable conviction, that there is only One who can bring salvation and redemption; The Lord God with His all-powerful love.¹⁵⁶

The Holy Gospel introduces the Advent figure of Saint John the Baptist, the great forerunner. The Roman Missal gives the account which the Lutheran and Anglican Service Books reserve for the Fourth Sunday.¹⁵⁷ Saint John is presented as the greatest of the prophets to act as a witness to the Christ.¹⁵⁸ The question of Saint John in the Holy Gospel is not only a natural one in the Advent-tide, but one that can be answered

¹⁵⁴The Latin texts are identical: "Excita, Domine, potentiam tuam, et veni."

¹⁵⁵The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁵⁶Johner, op. cit., p. 31

¹⁵⁷Reed, op. cit., p. 440.

¹⁵⁸Alt, op. cit., p. 468.

from the Advent messages. Today the Church, as Saint John of old, bears witness to what she has seen and heard. As our Lord vouchsafed a definite answer to Saint John, so the Church through his mouth grants us the assurance that He Whom we seek and are preparing to receive - is the Christ.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent¹⁵⁹

Introit

Drop down, ye heavens, from above; and let the skies pour down righteousness.

Let the earth open; and bring forth salvation.

Ps. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

Collect

Stir up, O Lord, we beseech Thee, Thy power and come and with great might succor us that by the help of Thy grace whatsoever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished through Thy mercy and satisfaction; who livest, etc.

Epistle

Phil. 4: 4-7

Gradual

The Lord is nigh to all them that call upon Him: to all that call upon Him in truth.

V. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless His holy name. Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

V. Thou art my Help and my Deliverer: make no tarrying.
O my God. Hallelujah!

Gospel

John 1: 19-28.

¹⁵⁹The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., p. 55.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent is called Rorate, from the first word of the Introit.¹⁶⁰ More frequently it was called Ganite tuba, which are the first words of the first Responsory of Matins, and of the first antiphon of Lauds and Vespers.¹⁶¹ It has also been called Hebdomada or Dominica ante Natalem Domini, the week or the Sunday before the birth of our Lord,¹⁶² or Præparatio, since it is the "eigentliche Sonntag der Vorbereitung auf die Weihnacht, der zum Schluss die ganze christliche Betrachtung der Zeit zusammenfasst."¹⁶³

We have now entered into the week which immediately precedes the birth of the Messiah. That long-desired Coming might be even to-morrow; and at the farthest, that is, when Advent is as long as it can be, the beautiful feast is only seven days from us.

Setting the mood of this Fourth Sunday into poetry, Keble¹⁶⁴ says:

There is but one thing to fall back upon—
Our Lord's own Presence.
For we know the fault is in us, not in Him.
"The Lord's Hand is not shortened that it cannot save;
"Neither His Ear heavy that it cannot hear."
The Collect prays for this Presence;
The Gospel assures us of it;
The Epistle bids us take comfort by it.

¹⁶⁰The Introit begins: "Rorate, caeli, desuper."

¹⁶¹Guéranger, op. cit., p. 243.

¹⁶²Haering, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁶³Strauss, op. cit., p. 96.

¹⁶⁴Keble, op. cit., p. 32.

At first this Sunday was a Dominica vacat (one which did not have a set of its own propers), for in early days the Ember Saturday Mass was celebrated during the night and only later was pushed back to Saturday morning.¹⁶⁵ Finally, texts were borrowed from the Masses of the Advent Ember Days, which precede it, and a set of Fourth Sunday Propers was formed.¹⁶⁶

The Introit is a composite of three different liturgical pieces. Formerly the Introit Memento nostri was sung on the Fourth Sunday.¹⁶⁷ Beckmann¹⁶⁸ traces the various sources:

Beim Introitus haben wir drei Ueberlieferungen: a) «Veni et ostende nobis faciem tuam, Domine» (v. ps. 79, 4.2). Rh. heruebergonnen vom vorhergehenden Samstag der 12 Lesungen. b) «Memento nostri Domine» (v. ps. 106, 4.2) SG. Ch. L.E.A. Eine eigene Messe, in MA weit verbreitet. c) «Horate, coeli, desuper, et nubes pluant iustum: aeriater terra et germinet Salvatorem.» (Ps.) «Coeli, enarrant gloriam Dei: et opera manuum eius annuntiat firmamentum» (Jes. 45 V.8; v. Ps. 18 V.2). M₂, MR. Heruebergonnen vom Gutenbermittwoch im Advent. Unter diesen drei Moeglichkeiten erscheint uns die letzte, die sich im MR behauptet hat, in der Tat die geeignetste Loesung zu sein, da sie dem Charakter des Sonntags am meisten entspricht.

¹⁶⁵Parsch, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁶⁶Beckmann, op. cit., p. 215.

¹⁶⁷Johns, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁶⁸Beckmann, op. cit., p. 215. Key: Ch.-Antiphon. miss. Carmitensis (Chartres); I-Antiphon. miss. St. Greg. Leon aus dem 9. Jahrhundert; II-Antiphon. miss. St. Gregor. Einsiedeln, 10-11. Jahrhundert; A-Antiphon. Biblioth. Angelicae ad S. August. Rom.; MR- das nachtridentinische Missale Romanum; M₂- Miss. Romanum Mediolani, 1474.
Schuster, op. cit., p. 352.

Johner¹⁶⁹ says that in this Introit we implore the descent of the Just One from heaven. But His justice will not make His countenance the less benevolent, nor His eyes the less loving. He comes not to reproach, not to drive sin-laden man away in confusion; He comes as the Savior, calling to Himself all who are weary or burdened. Commenting further, he speaks about the concept of cloud in the Israelite mind:

What would this earth be without the Messiah? A desert, an uncharted and arid waste scorched by the sun, having not one little flower or blade of grass. If new life is to spring forth, the ground must be cultivated, the clouds must send down their rain, the fructifying rain which is so valuable that the Portuguese say of the summer showers: "Gold pieces are now falling from heaven." Oh, that it might come, this rain, to penetrate into the hearts of men and awaken new life! Would that the clouds might have mercy! For the Israelites the concept of cloud was full of deep meaning: in the column of cloud God led His people through the desert; veiled by clouds He manifested Himself on Sinai; in a cloud the glory of the Most High descended upon the Temple which Solomon had built. Clouds are the symbol and the containers of life-giving rain, as well as of the grace of redemption which comes down to us from the heights of heaven, and of all the benefits and glories of the new kingdom of the Messiah.¹⁷⁰

There is power in the very first word of this Advent Collect addressed to the Second Person of the most Holy Trinity. In this instance we owe this address to Christ to a change that was made by Gregory the Great.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹Johner, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

¹⁷¹Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

Of this Fourth Sunday Collect Strodach¹⁷² says:

As this solemn season began, full well realizing all the implications in The Advent, so it closes, Stir up, O Lord, Thy power and save. "Arise, O God..." "stir up Thy strength"; a cry for help; an alarm to make battle; a plea for protection; a prayer for fulfillment.

And how dramatically we pray! - as if the work of our redemption were not yet begun; as if it really depended on His Coming in a few more days...and thus we plead for haste! Therefore, too, how earnestly, deliberately, solemnly this Little Prayer leads us to the Manger: that Babe and sin! - a world of sin, - my sin! - that Babe and succor and accomplishment! - that Babe and God's Power and grace, mercy, and satisfaction! It makes us think of other things than the merriment of Christmastide!

The Epistle with its cry: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice,"¹⁷³ is the signal for the beginning of unabated joy and happiness in this Christmas season. Alt¹⁷⁴ says that this theme of the Epistle:

erinnert aber zugleich auch an die Lindigkeit im Umgang mit Anderen und an das gläubige Gebet als sicherstes Mittel, der irdischen Sorgen los und ledig und des seligen Friedens in Gott theilhaftig zu werden, wodurch aller Segen und alle Freude einer christlichen Weihnachtsfeier bedingt ist.

The Gradual is consoling in its message: "The Lord is nigh."

That for which we had hoped and prayed so fervently is really coming true. He will come to us with all His love. To all who pray to Him in truth

¹⁷²Strodach, The Collect for the Day, pp. 34-5.

¹⁷³Phil. 4:4.

¹⁷⁴Alt, op. cit., p. 469.

He will reveal Himself and will fulfill His word: "Even before ye call upon Me, behold, I am here."¹⁷⁵ But our prayer must be in truth; and our supplication must be straight-forward, candid.

The Alleluia verse announces the purpose of the Savior's coming: to forgive the sins of His people. For this we pray. This is the heart and center of His mission. It was for this that His great love prompted Him to come down to earth.

Today the Herald's testimony concerning this Savior is read in the Holy Gospel. He is not the One, in fact, he is not worthy even to unloose the shoes' latchet of the Lord. But he points the way; he is the great way-preparer. So in this last Sunday of preparation, we come face to face with Him Who was sent by the Father, Jesus Christ. We press on to Bethlehem, and there worship Him as The Lord.

¹⁷⁵Isaiah 65:24.

The Ember Days of the Season

The name of Ember Weeks (Quatuor Tempora) is given to those weeks which, occurring at the four seasons of the year, were in the early days of the Church characterized by a fast on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.¹⁷⁶

No doubt they were originally connected with the seasonal feasts of the ancient Romans, and were retained to implore God's blessing upon the earth,¹⁷⁷ but their origin remains very obscure.

However, from the third and even from the second century, Wednesday and Friday have been known as liturgical days on which Mass was celebrated, and formal meetings and synaxes took place. Not long after, Saturday was added, probably because at Rome it was already a vigil.¹⁷⁸

It is claimed that the introduction of these Ember Days was made during Apostolic times, at least that is the opinion of Saint Leo, of Saint Isidore of Seville, of Rabanus Maurus and of several other ancient Christian writers.¹⁷⁹

Tradition has it that they were already being celebrated at the time of Pope Callistus, A.D. 222.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶Cabrol, op. cit., p. 25.
Rietschel, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁷⁷Cabrol, op. cit., pp. 25-6.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹Guéranger, op. cit., p. 227.

¹⁸⁰Rietschel, op. cit., p. 167.

It is quite possible that they were inspired by the fast observed by the Jews in the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth month.¹⁸¹

Until about the fourth or fifth century, the Ember Days occurred only three times in the year, their Lenten observance being of a later date.¹⁸² For this reason they are sometimes called the fast of the three seasons.¹⁸³ Speaking of these three seasons, Parsch¹⁸⁴ says:

...urspruenglich sind es Erntedankfeste (und zwar bloss drei nach den drei grossen Erntern: Weizen, Wein, Oel - die bedeutendsten liturgischen Natur-symbole).

Although, since the fourth series of Ember Days occurs in Lent and coincides with the Lenten fast of that week it may well be that there were always four, the one during Lent, being a fast already, was omitted in the count.¹⁸⁵

Though they were originally a Roman custom,¹⁸⁶ they were gradually adopted throughout the Western Latin Church.¹⁸⁷ Saint Noniface introduced them into Germany¹⁸⁸ and the Synod of Mainz, A.D. 813, decreed

¹⁸¹Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁸²Gabrol, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁸³Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁸⁴Parsch, op. cit., p. 34.

Advent Ember Days (Loveland, Ohio: Grailville, 1948), p. 3.

¹⁸⁵Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁸⁶Gabrol, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁸⁷L. Duchesne, Christian Worship Its Origin And Evolution, translated from the French by H. I. McClure, (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1931), Fifth Edition, p. 232.

¹⁸⁸Gabrol, op. cit., p. 26.

that they be celebrated in France.¹⁸⁹ They were not universally observed until the eleventh century. It was Pope Urban II, A.D. 1095, who fixed them in the form in which we now have them.¹⁹⁰

They are fixed for the four seasons of the year as follows: the Wednesdays, Friday and Saturdays of the third week in Advent; of the third Week in Lent; of Pentecost week; and of the September Ember Week.¹⁹¹

Except for the last-named, which has a distinctive character of its own,¹⁹² the Ember Days have no special liturgical significance, but take their tone from the season in which they occur.¹⁹³ The December Ember Days, then, take their theme from the Advent Liturgy.

Die Adventquaterber sind Weihnachtsvorbereitung und ausgesprochene Adventliturgie, die wir leider an Wochentagen sonst sehr vermischen. Denn die letzten grossen Vorbereitungen auf die Ankunft Christi werden getroffen in dieser Quaterberfeier.¹⁹⁴

They are a final step in the preparation for Christmas which was begun on the First Sunday in Advent. "In the liturgy, they summarize beautifully the weeks of longing that have gone before, and they give us the prophecies concerning Christ's Birth and Epiphany in the anticipation of the

¹⁸⁹Rietschel, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁹¹Ibid.

¹⁹²Ibid.
Gabrol, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.
Advent Ember Days, op. cit., p. 4.
Parsch, op. cit., p. 35.

Christmas celebration.¹⁹⁵

The first theme of the Ember Days is gratitude to God for the spiritual and material harvests of the year.¹⁹⁶ As an expression of thankfulness, it was originally the custom for Christians to bring a tenth of their harvest to the Church during the Offertory of the Mass to be blessed and used for the support of the priests and the relief of the poor. During these days the people fasted, not so much as an expression of penance but rather as a joyful offering of the first fruits to God, asking for His blessing and graces in return.¹⁹⁷

In the year 1527, Dr. Martin Luther declared himself to be opposed to fasting during the Ember Days. He felt that these days were not days of sorrow but rather feast days in which joy should be the key-note.¹⁹⁸

Secondly, these quarterly days were used as days of spiritual renewal. In the passing course of the whole year we realize that we are constantly in need of purification. "The Ember feasts are like milestones placed at each quarter of the year, they are reminders to us who are pilgrims through life to look back over the way we have already covered, to repent of our sins, and to go forward with new resolution toward our eternal

¹⁹⁵Ibid.,

¹⁹⁶Advent Ember Days, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁹⁸Rietschel, op. cit., p. 168.

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The third theme is that of ordination to the ministry of the Church. It was an ancient tradition in the Church to reserve ordinations of the priests and deacons to the Saturdays of Ember Week.²⁰⁰ According to the early papal chronicles, originally the most usual time for ordinations was Advent, on the Ember Days of the tenth month; in other words, in December, for the yearly cycle began with the month of March.²⁰¹

At this time God puts us all in mind,
both priests and people,
Of the care He hath taken of His flock,
In providing Shepherds under Himself.²⁰²

Thus, Ember Week, particularly Ember Saturday, is a special time set aside for Christians throughout the world to pray for the priests about to be ordained.²⁰³

The Propers for these Ember Days can be found in the Roman Missal.²⁰⁴ They are all quite evangelical and use, for the most part, the Propers

¹⁹⁹Advent Ember Days, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 4.
Parsch, op. cit., p. 34.
Reed, op. cit., p. 440.

²⁰¹villeneuve, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁰²Keble, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁰³Advent Ember Days, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁰⁴Lefebvre, op. cit., pp. 16-26.

of the various Advent Sundays as they are found in The Lutheran Hymnal.

The theme of the Ember Wednesday Mass is celebrated both on Ember Wednesday and on March 25th: the Incarnation of Christ. The liturgy ceases to be historic on Ember Wednesday. She wants to place this mystery just before the birth of Christ (the Christmas celebration) to act as a prelude to it.²⁰⁵ The historical event is placed on the 25th of March to correspond to the 25th of December. It is always thought provoking to consider this beginning of the saving work of Christ so close to the great feast of Christmas.²⁰⁶ In the Middle Ages this feast was celebrated with great solemnity and was called the Missa aurea or Golden Mass.²⁰⁷ This was the day on which Saint Bernard, the "honey-mouthed" Doctor of the Church, every year preached his celebrated homilies on the Gospel known as "super Missus est."²⁰⁸

The fact that this Gospel was chosen for the Office and Mass of Ember Wednesday has made this Wednesday in the Third Week of Advent a very marked day in the calendar. In several ancient Ordinaries we find it prescribed that any feast falling on this Wednesday should be transferred:

²⁰⁵Parsch, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁰⁶Ibid.

²⁰⁷Ibid.

²⁰⁸Advent Ember Days, op. cit., p. 6.

that the formal prayer should not be said kneeling, on that day; that the Gospel Missa est, that is, of the Annunciation, should be sung at Matins by the celebrant, vested in white cope, with cross, lights, and incense, the great bell tolling meanwhile.²⁰⁹

The thoughts of Advent are clearly brought out in the Golden Mass:

Das Volk hat eine schoene Symbolik mit dieser Messe verbunden. Sie wird vor Sonnenaufgang, als noch in der Winternacht gefeiert. So ziehen die Leute mit der Laterne in der Hand durch Schnee, Kaelte und Finsternis zum hellerleuchteten Gotteshaus, wo der Priester in weissen Festkleid zum hl. Offer erscheint.²¹⁰

This reminded them of the approaching feast in which they would celebrate the birth of Him whose Light dispels all darkness.

The Ember Friday Gospel is that of Mary's Visitation to Elizabeth. The events leading up to the birth of Christ are thus continued in the Ember Week readings. With the feast almost upon us, they act as a last preparation before the great event. Speaking of this Gospel, Parsch²¹¹ says:

"Maria" Heimsuchung: Vertiefen wir uns in das Tagesgeheimnis. Maria hat die Engelbotschaft empfangen: sie soll Mutter des Erloesers werden. Wenn wir Menschen ein grosses Erlebnis ge-

²⁰⁹Guéranger, op. cit., p. 229.

²¹⁰Parsch, op. cit., p. 26.

²¹¹Ibid., p. 42.

habt haben, dann wüßten wir es gern anderen mitteilen; denn geteiltes Leid ist halbes Leid, geteilte Freude doppelte Freude. Maria hatte in Nazareth niemand, den sie zum Mitwisser ihres Geheimnisses machen wollte. Der Engel aber wies ihr den Weg: Ihre alte Tante Elisabeth wird ihr mütterlichen Rat erteilen; sie bedarf auch ihrer Hilfe. Darum entschliesst sie sich, sie heimzusuchen. Sie macht sich auf den Weg, vier Tage dauert die Wanderung, weilig¹² geht sie, womit sie ihre Freude, ihren Eifer bekundet.

For a thorough discussion of the Ember Saturday Propers, Cardinal Schuster's excellent comments²¹² are significant and helpful.

²¹²Schuster, op. cit., pp. 337-351.
 Parsch, op. cit., p. 44.

CHAPTER III

CUSTOMS OF THE SEASON

It has been said that the first day of our Church Year, a year so divine and so sanctifying, must not simply come and go.

If it is tactless to neglect the "Happy New Year" wish on the first day of the civil year, what would it be to not pay attention to the first day of the sacred year? Should not we - other Christ's and members of His body - greet one another with a "Blessed New Year"? Let the pastor set the example by wishing his flock a "Blessed New Year" in his sermon on the First Sunday of Advent. The teachers in the grade school (and, if they be humble and childlike enough, also the professors of higher education) should prepare their charges for this important day in our spiritual life.¹

For Advent Sunday the church should be thoroughly cleaned, all metal ornaments polished, all linens (including linen vestments) freshly laundered and ironed and wrinkles carefully removed from the other vestments and paraments, and the candlesticks fitted with new candles.²

In conjunction with the First Sunday a report, covering the spiritual state of the parish since the previous Advent Sunday, may be read or published.³

It should also be noted that the widespread and exaggerated anticipation of Christmas characteristic of the secular world and the commercial world should not be encouraged or imitated in the Church. It has been

¹Martin B. Mellriegel, "Merely Suggesting," Oratio Fratres, XVI (November 30, 1941), p. 25.

²Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Ecclesiastical Arts," American Lutheran, XIX (June, 1947), p. 10.

³Ibid.

pointed out that Christmas begins with Vespers on the 24th of December, not before. While the Christian soul looks forward with longing to Christmas, prior to the beginning of the festival there should be no Christmas services, Christmas carols, Christmas anthems, Christmas music or musicales, or Christmas parties in the church or under the church auspices. Violation of this rule not only contradicts the spirit and vitiates the purpose of Advent, but it dulls the celebration of Christmas and largely empties the post-Christmas cycle of meaning. Where Christmas carol services and Christmas musicales are traditional in a parish, they can be tactfully replaced by Advent musicales and Advent carol services.⁴

The Church, preparing to meet Her Divine Bridegroom, recalls the time in the world's history which prophesied His first coming, and anticipates His final appearance in the clouds of heaven.

From the land of Dr. Martin Luther's birth has come the lovely custom of the Advent Wreath, which has for its purpose a deepening of the understanding of Christmas. As time passes from Advent Sunday to the Vigil of Christmas, the wreath grows in beauty until it is replaced finally by the Christmas crib and the Christmas tree.⁵

Originally the Advent Wreath might have been a cart wheel, wound with greens and decorated with lights, strung up in the halls of the sun-worshipping tribes of northern Europe. To appease their "hidden"

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

⁵Francis W. Jones, "The Advent Wreath," Una Sancta, VI (All Saints, 1945), p. 8.

god during the darkest winter days they took a wheel from their cart, sacrificing, as it were, its use, while they pondered about the blessings of light and life and implored the sun god to return to them.

The Christians preparing for their feast of light and life: the Nativity of the Savior, found this wheel or wreath an appropriate means. Adding one light for each of the four Sundays in Advent they think about the darkness without God after the Fall, the growing hope for salvation, enkindled in Paradise, nourished through the ages by the prophets up to Saint John, the Precursor, until the Morning Star who will lighten our darkness arrives.

The wreath without beginning and end stands for eternity; the greens for life and growth; the four candles, preferably blessed and set aside since Candlemas, present the ages "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death."⁶ "The steadily increasing flames are eloquent symbols of the Light of the world."⁷

The following simple instructions are offered for the making of a wreath:

You will need four or five good evergreen branches; any Christmas tree dealer will have more than enough discarded trees and branches for this purpose. Also needed will be four (white) candles, two to three yards of two-inch purple ribbon, a spool of black or green thread or fine wire, and a hoop with four candle holders. The greens.. are wound with thin wire or thread until the desired thick-

⁶"The Advent Wreath," published by Saint Helena's Workshop, St. Paul, Minnesota, (four page pamphlet).

⁷Hellriegel, op. cit., p. 26.

ness is reached. The wreath is then hung by four purple ribbons, fastened with simple knots in the spaces between the candles.⁸

At home, if there is no suitable place to hang the wreath, it may be suspended from a stand. A more simple procedure is to set the wreath on a buffet or side table, in which case the evergreens may be loosely tied or arranged in a circle around four low candle holders placed directly on the table or buffet.

The four candles used in the church should preferably be of white beeswax. The four used in the home may be red. It has also been suggested that at home a small white candle may be added for each day of the week, beside the four red ones representing the Sundays.

A star may be added each day with an Old Testament prophecy written on one side and the New Testament fulfillment on the other side. These can be memorized by the children at home.⁹

An accompanying Table will offer suggested memory texts for use with the wreath.

The blessing of the wreath should take place in the home on Saturday evening before the First Sunday in Advent. The following prayers are suggested:¹⁰

⁸"The Advent Wreath," op. cit.

⁹Jones, op. cit., p. 8.
Ruth Heller, Christmas, its Carols, Customs, and Legends (Chicago: Hall & McCreary Co., 1948), p. 37.

¹⁰"Advent Wreath," leaflet published by Altar & Home Press, Conception, Mo.

Father: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who has made heaven and earth.

Father: Let us pray. O God, by whose word all things are sanctified, pour forth Thy blessing upon this wreath, and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from Thee abundant graces. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

At the evening meal each day, the youngest child could light the candle(s), the Collect for the week prayed by the father, and the prophecy read. The devotion could close with the singing of a hymn.¹¹

¹¹"The Advent Wreath," op. cit.

Jones, op. cit., p. 8.

TABLE IV¹²

Advent Wreath Texts

1. Sunday in Advent	St. Matt. 21:5	Ps. 24
Monday	Genesis 3: 1-15(15)	
Tuesday	Genesis 12: 1-7(3)	
Wednesday	Genesis 49: 8-12(10)	
Thursday	Numbers 24: 1-17(17)	
Friday	Deut. 18: 15-22(15)	
Saturday	Isaiah 9: 1-6(6)	
2. Sunday in Advent	St. Luke 21:36	2
Monday	Isaiah 40: 1-11(1-2)	
Tuesday	Isaiah 42: 1-10(1)	
Wednesday	Isaiah 49: 1-6(6)	
Thursday	Isaiah 59: 16-21(20)	
Friday	Isaiah 60: 1-3(1)	
Saturday	Isaiah 61: 1-11(1-2)	
3. Sunday in Advent	St. Luke 1:68	132
Monday	Jer. 23: 3-8(5)	
Tuesday	Jer. 33: 14-22(15)	
Wednesday	Zech. 9: 9-12(9)	
Thursday	Ezekiel 34: 11-23(23)	
Friday	Mal. 3: 1-6(1)	
Saturday	Micah 5: 2-4(2)	
4. Sunday in Advent	St. Luke 1:76	143
Monday	Ro. 1: 1-6(2-3)	

The memory verses are indicated by the Parentheses.

¹²Ibid., p. 9.

The wreath used in the church should be hung in some prominent place, such as from the chancel arch or rood-beam or over the center alley at the head of the nave. It is hung sufficiently high to clear the heads of those who walk beneath it, but low enough that the candles can be lit with a candle-lighter of normal length.¹³

The following service was suggested for use in the church on the evening before the First Sunday:¹⁴

1. Advent hymn e.g., "Drop down dew"
2. Brief instruction
 - a) beginning of the Church's New Year
 - b) the meaning of the season of Advent
 - c) the significance of the Advent wreath
3. Hymn: "Oh come, Oh come, Emmanuel"
4. Prayers
5. Blessing of the Advent wreath and the lighting of the first candle (reading of Scripture)
6. Hymn

Concerning the lighting of the candles on the wreath in the church the simplest is to light the proper number of candles on the wreath, without special ceremony, prior to the lighting of the candles on the altar. A second possibility is, before the service begins, to light any candles on the wreath that have been lit on previous Sundays in Advent. Then the candle for the Sunday in question is lighted by a server in cassock and surplice or rochet during the singing of the gradual and versus alleluaticus (or the Advent Sentences or Alleluia, if either be substituted for the gradual and versus alleluaticus) or at the Advent

¹³Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁴Hellriegel, op. cit., p. 27.

process, the Advent sequence, or an Advent hymn such as "Oh come, Oh come, Emmanuel," after (or in place of) the gradual and versus alleluianus. If the ceremony of lighting the candle takes place at matins or vespers, the candle may be lit during the singing of the Venite at the former and of the office hymn at the latter. The third procedure again has any previously lit candles on the wreath lighted before the service begins, with a server lighting the candle during the reading of the Old Testament prophecy before the Epistle. The Advent wreath is lighted for all services held in the church during the season.¹⁵

In a number of places here and abroad, the custom has sprung up of using the Advent candle.¹⁶ It is a large candle resting in a candle-stick which has been decorated with flowing white silk, trimmed with blue and gold ribbon. The candle emerges from a rose which is placed on top of the candle-stick. It visibly reminds us that the Theotokos, Mary who is the bearer of the Son of God, will soon give birth to Jesus, represented by the candle, Who is the light of the world.

¹⁵Siepkorn, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

For other interesting information about the Advent Wreath see the following:

Bernard Strasser, With Christ Through the Year. (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 70-71.

Theresa Mueller, Our Children's Year of Grace. (Saint Louis: Plo Decimo Press, c.1943), p. 9.

Lutheran Liturgical Calendar (Eire, Penna.: Ashby Co., 1950).

Maria Augusta Trapp, The Story of the Trapp Family Singers. (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., Seventh Impression, 1950), pp. 39-42.

William Palmer Ladd, Prayer Book Interleaves. (New York: Oxford University Press, c.1943), p. 26.

¹⁶Hellriegel, op. cit., p. 42.

The people are forcibly reminded of the penitential character of the season by the sombre color of the vestments and paraments. Except on the Feasts of Saints, violet is the only color used.¹⁷

In those churches where Solemn Choral Eucharist is celebrated during Advent, the Deacon does not wear the Dalmatic, nor the Sub-deacon the Tunic.¹⁸

If flowers are placed on or about the altar at other times during the year, they should be omitted during Advent, except on Gaudete Sunday or festivals, such as Saint Thomas Day.¹⁹

The Invitatory of matins can serve as an ejaculatory prayer of preparation for the great feast of Christmas. For the first two weeks it is: Regem venturum Dominum, venite adoremus (Come, let us worship the Lord our King who is to come); and for the second half of the season: Prope est iam Dominus, venite adoremus (The Lord is now near; Come, let us worship).²⁰

¹⁷ Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.

Heinrich Alt, Der Christliche Cultus, (Berlin: G. W. F. Mueller, 1860), II Abtheilung, p. 300.

Prosper Guéranger, "Advent," The Liturgical Year, translated from the French by Laurence Shephard (Dublin: James Duffy, 1870), Second Edition, p. 35.

Paul Zeller Strodach, A Manual on Worship (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), Revised Edition, p. 132.

¹⁸ Guéranger, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁹ Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 11.

Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.

²⁰ Rodrigue Villeneuve, An Introduction to the Liturgical Year, translated from the French by J. A. Otto Eisenzimmer (New York: Pustet, 1946), p. 17.

The Morning Office Hymn at Matins is Vox clara ecce intonat.²¹

An Advent Litany may be used at The Prayers of matins or vespers and in connection with other devotions. See Table V.²²

It is a custom of the Church, during Advent, excepting on the Feasts of Saints, to suppress the Angelic Canticle, Gloria in excelsis Deo.²³ This glorious song was first sung over the fields of Bethlehem in the night of our Savior's birth. During Advent "the tongue of the Angels is not loosened yet; - the Virgin has not yet brought forth her Divine Treasure."²⁴ The Alleluia is retained.²⁵

²¹Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.

The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn #60.

²²H. Oscar Schlessmann, Jr., et al. (Spring City, Penna.: Inter-Borough Press, 1940), p. 4.

²³Guéranger, op. cit., p. 36.

Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.

Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.

Ildefonso Schuster, The Sacramentary, translated from the Italian by Arthur Levelis-Marke (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924), Volume I, 321.

Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 17.

Alt, op. cit., p. 300.

Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1947), "The omission of the Gloria on Sundays in Advent and from Septuagesima to Easter is not indicated in the Gregorian Sacramentary, but is suggested by the Ordo Romanus Primus, where it is used *si tempus fuerit*, 'if it is the season for it'. This further restriction in the use of the hymn...may not have suggested itself until the seventh century." p. 457.

²⁴Guéranger, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁵Alt, op. cit., p. 300.

See Chapter II of this thesis.

At matins the Church suspends the hymn of jubilation, Te Deum laudamus.²⁶

It is in deep humility that she awaits the supreme blessing which is to come to her; and in the interval, she presumes only to ask, and entreat, and hope. But let the glorious hour come, when, in the midst of darkest night, the Sun of Justice will suddenly rise upon the world, - then indeed she will resume her hymn of thanksgiving, and all over the face of the earth, the silence of midnight will be broken by this shout of enthusiasm: "We praise thee, O God! we acknowledge thee to be our Lord! Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory, the everlasting Son of the Father! Thou, being to deliver man, didst not disdain the Virgin's womb!"²⁷

At matins the Te Deum may be replaced by another canticle. Benedictus is very appropriate.²⁸

The ancient Advent sequence, Salus aeterna, "Savior eternal," is also available in a good English translation and arrangement.²⁹

Especially appropriate as an anthem before the Holy Gospel is the beautiful prose Horate caeli, "Drop down, ye heavens," of which an excellent English translation and arrangement is contained in The English Hymnal.³⁰

²⁶Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.

Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.

Gueranger, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.

The Lutheran Hymnal, op. cit., permits the substitution of the Benedictus, p. 34.

²⁹Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.

³⁰Ibid.

Mueller, op. cit., pp. 23-4.

TABLE V

An Advent Litany

- V. Lord, have mercy upon us.
R. Lord, have mercy upon us.
- V. Christ, have mercy upon us.
R. Christ, have mercy upon us.
- V. Lord, have mercy upon us.
R. Lord, have mercy upon us.
- V. Jesus, Name called Wonderful;
Jesus, our great Counsellor;
Jesus, true and mighty God;
Jesus, Everlasting Father;
Jesus, Prince of Peace;
R. We praise and bless Thy Holy Name.
- V. Jesus, Son of David;
Jesus, Branch of Jesse;
Jesus, Rose of Sharon;
Jesus, Lily of the Valleys;
Jesus, Bright and Morning Star;
R. Deliver us from our sins, we beseech Thee.
- V. Jesus, Sceptre of Israel;
Jesus, Light of the Gentiles;
Jesus, Desire of all Nations;
Jesus, Sun of Righteousness;
Jesus, Saviour, Priest, Judge, and King;
R. Help us and bless us.
- V. O Jesus hear us:
R. And prepare us for Thy coming.
- V. Gather Thine ancient people, the Jews, unto
Thyself;
Cause all the Gentiles to come to Thy light
and truth;
Convert all kings and rulers to fall down be-
fore Thee, and to desire Thy beauty!
R. Hear our prayer, O Lord, and let our cry come
unto Thee.

- V. Help Thy messengers to prepare the way
before Thee in every land;
Let all the nations fear Thee as long as the
sun and the moon endure, throughout all
generations;
Endue Thy ministers with righteousness and
knowledge;
And give peace unto all Thy people!
- R. Hear our prayer, O Lord, and let our cry come
unto Thee.
- V. Prepare us for Thy coming!
R. And save us from our sins.

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN....

At liturgical services, the organ should be used only to support weak singing by the choir and congregation; preludes, postludes and interludes should be avoided.³¹

Statt der sonst etwa üblichen Instrumentalbegleitung ist nur Vocalmusik zulässig, ja selbst hinsichtlich der Orgel war man längere Zeit hindurch zweifelhaft, bis die S.R.G. in Rom (am 14. April 1753) auf die Frage: an servari possit asservata consuetudo, nunciandi organum tempora Quadragesimae et Adventus bejahend antwortete.³²

During Ember Week the great "O Antiphons" begin as the Church's final preparation for Christmas. They are the solemn antiphons chanted before and after the Magnificat in Vespers for each of the last seven days before the vigil of Christmas. Each of these invocations is a masterly compendium of the wealth of Scriptural prophecy concerning the Messiah.³³ They are addressed to Christ and begin with the exclamation "O". Hence their common name of O Antiphons, or sometimes simply, the O's of Advent. They replace the usual Magnificat antiphon of each day.³⁴

³¹Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 11.

Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.

Gaspard Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal, (Saint Paul, Minnesota: E. M. Lehmann Co., 1949), p. 5.

³²Alt, op. cit., p. 300.

³³Advent Ember Days (Cleveland, Ohio: Grailville, 1948), pp. 8-9.

³⁴Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 29.

Each gives the Messiah one of those titles from the Old Testament under which His coming was foretold to Israel. They are ranked among the most precious jewels of the liturgy.

The author is unknown. The best that can be done is to give a terminus ad quem, permitting us to recognize their composition as anterior to the eighth century. In fact, in the ninth century they were cited as already ancient by Amalarius and others.³⁵

There are seven of these antiphons, a prophetic number in the liturgy, as in the Old and New Testaments, and considered a perfect number.³⁶ In some Antiphonaries the total number of antiphons is nine, and some go even as high as twelve.³⁷ It has been pointed out that these lack the perfect construction of the original seven.³⁸

Further, either by accident or design, the first letters of the seven antiphons form the acrostic garcore, which reversed, gives us ero cras (I shall be to-morrow).³⁹

O Sapientia
O Adonai
O Radix
O Clavis
O Oriens
O Rex
O Emmanuel⁴⁰

³⁵Fernand Cabrol, The Year's Liturgy (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1940), Volume I, p. 32.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Villeneuve, op. cit., pp. 30-1.

³⁸Cabrol, op. cit., p. 33.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰William J. McGarry, He Cometh (New York: Spiritual Book Associates, 1941), p. 278.

The seven antiphons are:

O Wisdom, Who proceedest from the mouth of the Most High, reaching mightily from end to end, and sweetly arranging all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.⁴¹

O Lord and Leader of the House of Israel, Who didst appear to Moses in the fire of the burning bush, and didst give him the Law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with Thy outstretched Arm.⁴²

O Root of Jesse, Who standest for an ensign of the people, before Whom Kings shall be silent and to Whom the Gentiles shall pray: Come and deliver us and do not now delay.⁴³

O Key of David and Scepter of the House of Israel, Who openest and no man shutteth, Who shuttest and no man openeth: Come and bring out of his prison house the captive that sitteth in darkness and in the shadow of death.⁴⁴

O Orient, brightness of the eternal light and Sun of justice: Come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.⁴⁵

O King of Gentiles, their desire and the cornerstone that makest both one: Come and redeem man whom Thou didst form out of the dust of the earth.⁴⁶

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the Expectation and Savior of the Gentiles: Come and save us, O Lord our God.⁴⁷

⁴¹Based on Ecclesiasticus 24:5.

⁴²Based on Exodus 3:2-20.

⁴³Based on Isaiah 11:10.

⁴⁴Based on Job 12:14.

⁴⁵Based on Luke 1:78.

⁴⁶Based on Ephesians 2:14-20.

⁴⁷Based on Isaiah 7:14.

McGarry⁴⁸ says:

In their magnificent yet simple beauty the Great O's are the quintessence of the Advent liturgy. Their language bears the weight of God's eternity and mercy. They are a poignant cry of the soul of the people of the Advent; they address God by the most compelling and tender of divine names, and they always end with an intense Gong, Veni. All have the same structure, the O of apostrophe, and imperative of appeal.

Parsch⁴⁹ suggests that the O-Antiphons display a definite thought progression: first we see God's Son as the pre-existent Logos in His uncreated wisdom, Who created the world and now arranged all things mightily and sweetly. The creation of the world is an image of the much higher spiritual new creation through the redemption.

In the three following antiphons we see the Savior as He is pictured in the Old Testament as Covenant God and Leader of the Chosen People in the Wilderness, as the Root of Jesse, Who coming after Jesse will be the victorious, ever-reigning King, and as the Key of David, the fulfillment and consummation of all the mysteries and types of the Old Testament. In these antiphons we pray that the Savior bring about the realization of these promises.

In the fifth antiphon we employ the realm of nature and see in the sun a heavenly symbol of the Savior. This idea comes to us from the words of the Benedictus of Zacharias.

⁴⁸McGarry, op. cit., p. 319.

⁴⁹Plus Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles (Klosterneuburg, Weiss Volks-liturgisches Apostolat, 1947), pp. 39-40.

McGarry, op. cit., pp. 319-20.

In the sixth antiphon we see the Gentiles stretching out their hands to the Savior who joins both Jew and Gentile into one holy people of God. We cry to the Savior to make His Advent to the Gentiles, to redeem them whom He has created.

The seventh antiphon unites all preceding invocations and calls the Savior by the name which was given to Him by the prophet: Emmanuel, God with us.

It has been pointed out that the musical setting of these antiphons is a melody of the second mode, frequently occurring in the Gregorian Antiphonary, and probably of primitive origin. The opening is a very simple recitative, a short historical exposition of the title attributed to the Messiah, and the close is an appeal, an urgent prayer from the depths of the soul, beseeching the Messiah to come soon, to come Himself to instruct us, to inflame our souls with His Divine fire, and, by redeeming us, to deliver us from death.⁵⁰

The antiphons have the structure of the classic Roman collect: an invocation to the Coming Lord using a title or type; in the next a phrase that extends or explains the type or title; the petition is introduced with a longing or yearning, followed by a prayer to the Savior again presented in picture form.⁵¹

⁵⁰Cabrol, op. cit., p. 32.
Parsch, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵¹Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 10.
Strasser, op. cit., pp. 71-5.
Robert H. Heywood, "Meditations on The Seven Antiphons," The Living Parish, VI (December, 1945), pp. 8-9.

Gaudete Sunday departs from the usual practise of Advent. On this Sunday rose-colored vestments take the place of the usual violet;⁵² flowers are permitted on the altar;⁵³ the organ is played⁵⁴ and all the adjuncts of joy are in evidence.

From Gaudete Sunday on, The Suffrages are not said at vespers.⁵⁵

From most ancient times marriages were not solemnized in the church. At the council of Lerida in A.D. 524 the following rule was established: "Quod non oporteat ab Adventu Domini usque post Epiphaniam nuptias celebrare; quod si factum fuerit, separentur."⁵⁶

By the liturgical forms and external rites peculiar to this holy time, the Liturgy speaks to the outward senses, and completes and compliments the powerful message of the Word.⁵⁷

⁵²Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.
Parsch, op. cit., p. 30.
Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵³Parsch, op. cit., p. 30.
Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 11.
Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁴Parsch, op. cit., p. 30.
Piepkorn, op. cit., p. 11.
Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁵Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, op. cit.

⁵⁶Alt, op. cit., p. 301
Gueranger, op. cit., p. 35.
Dom Haering, "Advent," Grata Fratras IV (December 1, 1929), p. 5.

⁵⁷Gueranger, op. cit., p. 34.

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