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**THE MEANING OF THE EPIPHANY SEASON
OF THE CHURCH YEAR**

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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June 1953

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Epiphany might well be described as a neglected season of the Church Year. The festival from which the season gets its name ranks below Christmas and Easter in popular appeal. The season itself has not received the attention and study given to other seasons of the Church Year. The present work is a study of the meaning of the Epiphany Season of the Church Year in an attempt to re-interpret Epiphany.

To determine the meaning of the Epiphany Season, I undertook a study of the season's history, prayers, and customs. A study of the history of the season was necessary to understand the factors that produced the present meaning of the season. A study of the prayers of the season was necessary to reveal what the season actually means in the present life of the Church. A study of the customs of the season was necessary to determine how the season's meaning is reflected and augmented by the piety of the people. And so, in presenting the meaning of the Epiphany Season of the Church Year, I have divided the present work into three chapters following this introduction. The first deals with the history, the second with the prayers, and the third with the customs of the Epiphany Season.

The chapter on the history of the Epiphany Season traces Epiphany from its Eastern origin through its Western development to its present place in the Western Church, with special emphasis on its history in the Lutheran Church.

The chapter on the prayers of the Epiphany Season does not presume to be an original interpretation of the meaning of the season. Although I

worked with the propers themselves, I relied heavily on the interpretations of the authorities which I consulted. I relied most heavily on authorities which interpreted the propers popularly, and that accounts for the repeated citation of authors such as Parsch and Strodach in the footnotes.

The chapter on the customs of the Epiphany Season includes customs not in common use in the Lutheran Church in order to give a complete picture of the Western tradition in this area. In many cases, besides simply explaining an Epiphany custom, I also included practical suggestions as to how that custom could be carried out. This chapter also devotes some space to Epiphany hymns in common use in the church today.

Because of limitations of time and space it was necessary for me to restrict my study of the meaning of Epiphany to the Western tradition of the Church. And so, except for a description of its origins in the Eastern Church, I have not considered the history, meaning, or customs of the Epiphany Season in the Eastern tradition of Christendom.

I consulted Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman sources in order to get an accurate picture of the Western tradition. To substantiate any important points, I tried to cite authorities from all three communions in the footnotes. That accounts for the occasional coordination of an important authority of one communion with a relatively unimportant one of another communion.

My study of the meaning of the Epiphany Season has made it clear to me that Epiphany is extremely rich in theological significance and ought to rate high in popular appeal. It is my hope that this work will reflect and communicate that conviction.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE EPIPHANY SEASON

Like all the liturgy of the church the Epiphany season of the Church Year is the product of history and of centuries of growth and development. Just as it is impossible fully to understand the theology of an era without an understanding of the theology of the preceding eras, so it is impossible fully to understand the meaning of the Epiphany season in the present without an understanding of the past history of that season. The second chapter is a study of the history of the Epiphany season to aid in an understanding of the season's meaning for the present. The chapter is divided into three sections: The History of the Feast of Epiphany, The History of the Season following the Feast of Epiphany, and the History of the Feast of Candlemas.

The History of the Feast of Epiphany

Origin

Unlike the festivals of Easter and Pentecost the Feast of Epiphany cannot trace its history back to Apostolic times. Tertullian (A.D. 160-220), the first ecclesiastical writer to enumerate the feasts celebrated among the Christians, knows only the Easter and Pentecost festivals.¹ Origin

¹X. A. Heinrich Kellner, Heortology: A History Of The Christian Festivals From Their Origin To The Present Day, translated from the second German edition by a Priest of the Diocese of Westminster (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1908), p. 17.

(A.D. 185-234) omits it from the list of festivals he gives in Contra Celsum.² However, toward the end of the third century the Epiphany feast was celebrated throughout the East, and at the end of the fourth century the custom of celebrating the feast was universal in the church.³ Amianus Marcellinus relates that Julian, the Emperor, still disguising his pagan leanings, was present in a religious service at Vienna in Gaul on the day of Epiphany in 361. The Council of Saragossa in Spain in 380 mentions it as a very high festival.⁴ It is included in the first list of feasts and seasons in the fifth book of the Apostolic Constitutions,⁵ which was completed before the end of the fourth century.⁶ In that work it is listed as one of the days on which slaves were to be free from labor.⁷ In the East the sermons of Chrysostom afford ample proof for the existence of the

²Ibid., 167.

³L. Duchesne, Christian Worship: Its Origin And Evolution, translated from the French by H. I. McClure (Fifth edition; London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1931), p. 260.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Kellner, op. cit., p. 20. The feasts listed are Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week of the Passover, the Passover of the Resurrection, the Sunday After Easter, Ascension, Pentecost.

⁶Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1949), p. 228.

⁷Kellner, op. cit., p. 11.

feast in his day (347-407).⁸ Etheria, a pilgrim visitor at Jerusalem from the West in 385,⁹ witnesses the presence of the feast there at that time.¹⁰ The most ancient mention of the celebration of the feast by Christians is in the Passion of St. Philip, Bishop of Hieraclea in Thrace, in the year 304.¹¹

However, Clement of Alexandria (died before 216¹²) gives us the first indication that January 6, the traditional date of the Epiphany festival, was marked in some special way in the Christian calendar. He says that some of the orthodox Christians in his day regarded that date as the birthday of the Savior while the Basilidians, a Syrian Gnostic sect,¹³ observed January 10 as the birthday.¹⁴ He says they commemorated Christ's baptism in the Jordan, some on the 15th, others on the 11th, of the Egyptian month

⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁹Dix, op. cit., p. 357.

¹⁰W. K. Lowther Clarke, editor, Liturgy and Worship: A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936), p. 210.

¹¹Duchesne, op. cit., p. 260; For detailed quotations of references to Epiphany in the Church Fathers see Joseph Bingham, Antiquities of the Christian Church (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1844), VII, 66-87.

¹²J. L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, c.1946), I, 82.

¹³Heinrich Alt, Der Christliche Cultus (Second enlarged edition; Berlin: G. M. F. Müller, 1860), II, 38.

¹⁴Kellner, op. cit., p. 167.

Tybi, that is, January 10 or 6.¹⁵ Although we do not know the precise stages of the adoption of Epiphany by the orthodox churches in the East, the feast seems to have spread throughout the East from that time on.¹⁶ The Eastern churches, from the third century in some cases, observed a feast of our Lord's birthday on January 6 as "Epiphany," the feast of His "manifestation."¹⁷ The actual beginnings of the feast seem to go back as far as the late second century in some cases.¹⁸ From earliest times the feast was known either as ἡ ἐπιφάνεια or as τὰ θεοφάνια.¹⁹

There have been different explanations given for the feast's origin and its date. Some say that the orthodox Christians adopted the feast from the Basilidians in order to counteract the Gnostic heresy which was propounded by their feast. The Basilidians commemorated the baptism of Christ on that day, and it was their belief that the divine Logos was

¹⁵Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 259; Alt, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 39; Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 107.

¹⁷Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

¹⁸*Ibid.*; Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁹Alt, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Abbot Gueranger, The Liturgical Year, translated from the French by Laurence Shepherd (Fourth edition; Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1951), III, 107.

united with the human Jesus at this baptism. It is conjectured that the Christians felt the necessity of taking the baptism of Jesus, celebrated in a heretical sense, not as a feast of the uniting of the divine and human in Christ but as a feast of the manifestation of the divine in the human.²⁰

Others²¹ explain that Epiphany owes its origin "to the Church's efforts to supplant by a Christian observance popular Gentile feasts of the birthdays of saviour-gods of heathenism."²² On January 6 the Egyptians celebrated *Ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ Ὀσίριδος*, a feast intimately related with the Nile River, and the birthday of *Ἄϊων*.²³ From these two feasts, it is conjectured, the Christians drew the ideas of the birth and baptism of our Lord as the basis for a yearly commemoration.

Still others²⁴ combine the two views explained above. They say that

²⁰Ildafonso Schuster, The Sacramentary, translated from the Italian by Arthur Lovell-Marks (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924), I, 400; Alt. op. cit., p. 39.

²¹Wesley E. Shepherd, Jr., The Worship of the Church (Greenwich, Connecticut: Seabury Press, c.1952), p. 116; Friedrich Strauss, Das evangelische Kirchenjahr in seinem Zusammenhang (Berlin: Jonas Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1850), p. 138; Karl Holl, "Der Ursprung des Epiphaniensfestes," Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1927), p. 153

²²Shepherd, The Worship of the Church, p. 116.

²³Strauss, op. cit., p. 138; Holl, op. cit., p. 153.

²⁴Paul Zeller Strodach, The Church Year (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1924), p. 62; Fernand Cabrol, The Year's Liturgy (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1938), I, 85; Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, p. 107.

polemical consideration in regard to both the heathen and the heretics influenced the selection of January 6 as the Feast of Epiphany. The attempt to explain the origin by the conjecture that January 6 was the actual date of Christ's birth²⁵ seems to be a later endeavor to find a reasonable explanation for a feast already in existence. In any event, it seems as though the Epiphany feast owes its origin to the presence of pagan feasts on that day coupled with the fact that heretical Christians had already made use of these pagan feasts.

Originally, the main emphasis of the Feast of Epiphany was not the visit of the Magi, as it is in the Western churches today.²⁶ The feast originally commemorated several events: the birth of Christ, His baptism in the Jordan, the visit of the Magi, and the wedding of Cana.²⁷ Holl²⁸ has gone into great detail to demonstrate that these events were not added one upon the other in the course of time to emphasize the idea of "manifestation," but that they were all present in the original celebrations of the feast by the Christians. He finds all of these elements in the Egyptian feasts from which he believes the Christians developed their feast.²⁹ Strauss³⁰ draws similar conclusions. The Church Fathers vainly attempted to explain that

²⁵Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 264 cites this view. It is also presented in Strodach, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1947, p. 445.

²⁷Duchesne, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

²⁸*Op. cit.*, pp. 128 ff.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 138.

they all took place on the same day.³¹ No matter what the reason may be why the Church placed all these emphases on the same day, the point is evident that they were all used for the same purpose: to manifest Christ as the divine Redeemer.³² And because of the commemoration of a number of emphases the people spoke of it as die epiphaniarum sive manifestationum.³³

Development in Relation to Christmas

While the churches of Eastern Christendom were developing and spreading the Feast of Epiphany as the celebration of the birth of Christ, the Church of Rome introduced a nativity feast of its own,³⁴ celebrated not on the sixth of January but on the twenty-fifth of December.³⁵ Although the Eastern nativity festival antedated the Western nativity festival by some years, the introduction of Epiphany to the West from the East came only after the establishment of the Christmas observance in the West.³⁶ The Philocalian calendar of the time of Pope Damasus (366-384) shows that in 336 Rome had a Christmas festival on December 25, but there is no mention of Epiphany.³⁷ Pope Julius I (336-352) is supposed to have searched the

³¹Strodach, op. cit., p. 61; Guéranger, op. cit., p. 109.

³²It, op. cit., p. 39.

³³Kellner, op. cit., p. 167.

³⁴Strodach, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

³⁵Cabrol, op. cit., p. 85.

³⁶Strodach, op. cit., p. 61.

³⁷Cabrol, op. cit., p. 85.

state archives in Rome concerning the taxing of Caesar Augustus and from his investigations to have pronounced December 25 as the date of Christ's birth.³⁸ In 376 a decree of the Roman bishop required all churches to keep the Nativity on December 25 as Rome did.³⁹

In the latter part of the fourth century East and West began to exchange Nativity festivals and to keep Christmas and Epiphany side by side.⁴⁰ Christmas was not observed in Antioch until 375, St. John Chrysostom tells us,⁴¹ But it was observed there shortly after that and spread rapidly throughout the East.⁴² Naturally enough, some areas were slow to accept this duplication of feasts.⁴³ Alexandria was one of these,⁴⁴ and the feast was the first introduced in Jerusalem by Bishop Juvenalis around 431.⁴⁵ Chrysostom was an Eastern apologist for December 25 as the date of Christ's birth and so the correct date for a feast commemorating His birth.⁴⁶ It is

³⁸Alt. op. cit., p. 40.

³⁹Quenanger, op. cit., p. 107.

⁴⁰Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, p. 107; Dix, op. cit., p. 357.

⁴¹Duchesne, op. cit., p. 259.

⁴²Alt. op. cit., pp. 40-41.

⁴³Dix, op. cit., p. 357.

⁴⁴Duchesne, op. cit., p. 259.

⁴⁵Alt. op. cit., p. 41.

⁴⁶Ibid.

probably because the Eastern church believed Rome had a better basis for its tradition that it so readily allowed Christmas to supplant Epiphany as the Festival of the Nativity.⁴⁷ Because some Eastern churches kept January 6 as the festival of Christ's birth and did not celebrate December 25, Julian I (527-565), the Emperor, issued a decree that the birth of Christ was to be separated from the Epiphany feast and to be celebrated on December 25.⁴⁸ The Armenians alone, isolated in their mountains, are the only Eastern Christians who have never accepted the Western feast of December 25 and still keep Epiphany as our Lord's birthday.⁴⁹ Rome at first tried to get the churches of the West to replace Epiphany completely with its Christmas festival; when this failed, it used its influence to restrict the meaning of Epiphany as much as possible.⁵⁰ It is because of this influence that the emphasis of the Western Epiphany feast has always been different from the original Eastern emphasis.⁵¹

As East and West adopted each other's feasts,

there was a rough readjustment of their meanings, Christmas remaining a birthday-feast while Epiphany became the commemoration of the other 'manifestations' of Christ - to the Magi, at His Baptism and at Cana of Galilee.⁵²

⁴⁷Wilhelm Loehe, Hauss-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch fuer Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses (Stuttgart: S. G. Liesching, 1859), II, 40.

⁴⁸Holt, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴⁹Dix, op. cit., p. 358, footnote 1.

⁵⁰Holl, op. cit., pp. 133-135.

⁵¹Kellner, op. cit., p. 168; Holl, op. cit., p. 135.

⁵²Dix, op. cit., p. 357.

But as the East accepted the Christmas festival as the observance of Christ's birth, it soon considered the emphasis of Christ's baptism as the most important aspect of the Epiphany feast. The festival sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa witness to that fact.⁵³ The Calendar of Calcasendi indicates that the Copts in eighth century Egypt called Epiphany Immersionis, that is, Baptismus Domini.⁵⁴ Though the East introduced Christmas, it nevertheless kept Epiphany as the main feast. Epiphany, not Christmas, was the day of manifestation, Chrysostom tells us, because on Christmas Christ came to His own and His own received Him not, but on Epiphany He is manifested to the whole world.⁵⁵

In the West Rome tried to restrict the meaning of the celebration of Epiphany to the visit of the Magi when it failed in its attempts to suppress the feast entirely. However, outside of its own immediate sphere of influence, it could not get the West to accept its idea. Liturgies of the period from Spain, from Italy, from Gaul, from England and innumerable quotations of individuals indicate that the West retained the traditional threefold emphasis of Epiphany: the Baptism of Christ, the Visit of the Magi, and the Wedding of Cana.⁵⁶ The threefold emphasis is recognized by the

⁵³Holl, op. cit., p. 124.

⁵⁴Zellner, op. cit., p. 27.

⁵⁵Alt, op. cit., p. 42.

⁵⁶Holl, op. cit., p. 135.

Roman liturgy today in the antiphon of the Benedictus for the feast.⁵⁷

But Rome was nevertheless responsible for elevating the Visit of the Magi as the most important aspect of the feast and for emphasizing Epiphany as a manifestation to the Gentiles.⁵⁸ The Visit of the Magi is the sole event mentioned in the six Epiphany sermons of St. Augustine. Fulgentius deals with nothing else in his four sermons on Epiphany. The Mass in the Gelasian Sacramentary refers to this emphasis only.⁵⁹ One factor in the development of interest in the Wise Men may have been the transportation of the supposed relics of the Magi from Constantinople to Milan in the fourth century.⁶⁰

Subsequent Developments to Modern Times

In spite of its initial opposition the Church of Rome could not eliminate the traditional emphases from the Epiphany feast. Instead it separated them. It devoted the feast itself to a commemoration of the Visit

⁵⁷Kellner, op. cit., p. 169. For the Antiphon of the Benedictus see A Short History, edited by monks of St. John's Abbey (third edition; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1944), p. 346.

⁵⁸Clarke, op. cit., p. 210; Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, p. 107.

⁵⁹Kellner, op. cit., p. 168.

⁶⁰Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, p. 107.

of the Wise Men. It moved the Baptism of Jesus to the Sunday before Epiphany. It kept the Wedding of Cana as close as possible to the Epiphany feast.⁶¹ The Middle Ages settled the problem of what to do with the three-fold Epiphany emphasis. The Visit of the Wise Men was commemorated on the Feast, the Baptism of Jesus on the Vigil, and the Wedding of Cana on the Second Sunday after Epiphany.⁶² In addition, the Middle Ages saw the development of an Octave and of an Epiphany Season following the feast.⁶³

At the time of the Reformation the Lutheran Church took over the Medieval pericopes and customs.⁶⁴ The Unterricht der Visitatoren in Churfürstenthum Sachsen of 1528 urges the churches to keep the customary feasts so the people can be taught God's Word. It includes Epiphany in a list of six feasts which it considers especially important.⁶⁵ Nearly all the Lutheran Church Orders consider it a high feast.⁶⁶ The Feast of Epiphany

⁶¹Alt. op. cit., p. 42.

⁶²Th. Kliefoth, Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienst-Ordnung in den deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Destruction und Reformation (Second edition; Schwerin: Stiller'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1861), IV, 425.

⁶³Kellner, op. cit., p. 170; Cabrol, op. cit., p. 94.

⁶⁴Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 419.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 367-368.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 429.

was one of the feasts Luther himself wished to retain.⁶⁷ In his Hauspostille he calls it Der Tag der Erscheinung.⁶⁸ However, the Lutheran Church modified the usage of the Medieval Church, since it did not continue to observe the Octave and the Vigil of the Feast.⁶⁹ Luther would have liked to have made the Baptism of Jesus the main emphasis of the feast in place of the Visit of the Magi. The Lutheran Church Orders did not follow Luther in this respect.⁷⁰ Some Church Orders appointed the Baptism Gospel for the first or Second Sunday after Christmas.⁷¹ Others appointed it for the Vespers of the Feast.⁷²

The Calvinistic Reformation did not keep the Feast of Epiphany.⁷³ The feast was abolished along with all of the Church Year except Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.⁷⁴ Universa per orbem, the proclamation of Urban VIII

⁶⁷Kellner, op. cit., p. 35.

⁶⁸Robert Zilchert, Licht, Liebe, Leben: Eine Wanderung durch das Kirchenjahr (Leipzig: Carl Ziegenhirt, 1927), p. 28.

⁶⁹Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 429.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 429.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 426-427.

⁷²Strodach, op. cit., p. 61.

⁷³Kellner, op. cit., p. 35.

⁷⁴Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 365.

in 1642, prescribed Epiphany as a Holy Day for all Roman Catholics.⁷⁵

After the Reformation the use of the feast declined among the Lutherans. Alt⁷⁶ gives two reasons for this decline. One reason is that the feast generally occurred in the middle of the week. His other reason is more involved. Rome had neglected the feast in preference to Christmas. After the Reformation the Romanists sought to distinguish themselves from the Lutheran "heretics" who were using their feasts. And so, they emphasized Epiphany. In opposition to the Roman action, the Lutherans recoiled even more from using the Feast of Epiphany. Alt goes on to say that it was the missions emphasis of the feast which Lutherans used to reintroduce its observance. When the Lutherans became interested in missions, they saw the unique character of Epiphany in that respect. They celebrated it in the evening as a kind of mission festival.

Today the Feast of Epiphany is observed by the Roman, the Anglican and the Lutheran communions. The propers are the same for the Roman, the Anglican and the Lutheran rites except that the Epistle in the Prayer Book is Ephesians 3:1-12 instead of Isaiah 60:1-6.⁷⁷ See Chapter III for the propers of the Feast of Epiphany. The Missal lists the feast as a Double of the First Class with a privileged Octave,⁷⁸ and so ranks it with Easter

⁷⁵Kellner, op. cit., p. 30.

⁷⁶Op. cit., p. 481.

⁷⁷Reed, op. cit., p. 445.

⁷⁸Gasper Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal (Saint Paul, Minnesota: N. H. Lohmann Co., c.1949), p. 65.

and Pentecost as the highest feasts of the year, higher even than Christmas.⁷⁹ The Lutheran Liturgy, the Missal, and the English Prayer Book agree in placing the Wedding of Cana on the Second Sunday after Epiphany.⁸⁰ The American Prayer Book places the Baptism of Jesus on the Second Sunday after Epiphany and the Wedding of Cana on the Third Sunday.⁸¹ The Missal devotes the Octave Day of the Epiphany feast to the Baptism of Jesus.⁸² Some Lutheran rites, including some American rites, keep the Second Sunday after Christmas as the Festival of the Baptism of Our Lord.⁸³

The History of the Season

Following the Feast of Epiphany

The Development of an Octave

In the Roman Church Epiphany, like the other high feasts of the Church Year, is supplied with an Octave.⁸⁴ The idea of celebrating an important

⁷⁹Otto Haering, Living With The Church, translated by Rembert Gularsik (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1930), p. 15; William J. Lallou and Sister Josefita Maria, The Missal and Holy Mass (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1932), p. 141.

⁸⁰Reed, op. cit., p. 447.

⁸¹Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, pp. 112-113.

⁸²Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 74.

⁸³Lutheran Church Calendar (Eire, Pennsylvania: Ashby Co., c.1952). January notes.

⁸⁴Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 74.

feast for eight days has its origin in Judaism; the Jews prolonged the Passover and the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple for eight days.⁸⁵ In Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the time of St. Cyril (fourth century) the Epiphany feast lasted eight days.⁸⁶ Duchesne⁸⁷ says that this Jerusalem custom was generally followed everywhere at an early date. However, in the West Epiphany is equipped with an Octave for the first time in the Calendars of the eighth century. The Feast has no Octave, though it does have a Vigil, in the Gregorian Sacramentary. It is listed as a three day festival in the Calendar of Fronteau.⁸⁸ The ancient Roman lectionaries prolong the feast two to three days at the most. The present Octave of the feast seems to be of early medieval origin.⁸⁹

The Establishment of an Epiphany Season

For the first six centuries the ordinary Sunday of the year, among which the Sundays following the Feast of Epiphany were included, had no liturgical position or character; they were not even enumerated. A communio

⁸⁵ Kellner, op. cit., p. 15.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 171.

⁸⁷ Op. cit., p. 287.

⁸⁸ Kellner, op. cit., p. 170.

⁸⁹ Schuster, op. cit., p. 405.

dominicarum existed, that is, there were a collection of masses from which a mass was chosen for a particular Sunday. These Sundays were called dominicae quotidianae.⁹⁰ In the Galasian Sacramentary the Sundays after Epiphany have no special character. Besides a list of masses for the Sundays in Lent and for the Sundays between Easter and Pentecost, there are only sixteen masses listed for general use on other Sundays of the Church Year, including the Sundays after Epiphany.⁹¹ After the first six centuries we note a development of an Epiphany season. The Homiliarium of Charlemagne from eighth century France lists four Sundays after Epiphany. The Contra Albin lists five Sundays after Epiphany. The Gregorian Sacramentary written for Mainz under Archbishop Otgar c.849 has six Sundays after Epiphany.⁹² The Roman lectionaries count the Sundays either after Christmas or after Epiphany. The Würzburg Capitulary lists ten Sundays between Christmas and Lent, including the Sundays which are now known as Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima.⁹³ At any rate, the Epiphany season was instituted very late - after the seasons of Lent, Advent and Paschaltide, possibly even after the Septuagesima season.⁹⁴

At the time of the Reformation the Lutheran Church adopted the propers of the medieval Epiphany Season just as it adopted the propers of the

⁹⁰Kellner, op. cit., p. 177.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 178.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 179-180.

⁹³Schuster, op. cit., p. 409.

⁹⁴Cabrol, op. cit., p. 94.

Epiphany feast. However, even as late as the Osnabrücker Kirchenordnung of 1652, many Church Orders provided only five Sundays after Epiphany.⁹⁵ Previously the propers for the last three Sundays after Epiphany had been used either after Epiphany or at the very end of the Trinity season depending on which of the variable seasons needed the masses. However, by appointing special prayers for the last Sundays in the Trinity season, the Lutheran Use confined the last three Sundays after Epiphany to the Epiphany season.⁹⁶ In the Lutheran Church the Sundays after Epiphany assumed more and more the character of an extended Epiphany feast. This was done to make up for the neglect of Epiphany caused by the failure to celebrate the feast when it fell on a week-day.⁹⁷

The Lutheran Insertion of Transfiguration

The Common Service Book and The Lutheran Hymnal both appoint the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord for the last Sunday after the Epiphany in every year except when there is only one Sunday after the Epiphany.⁹⁸ This is a distinctly Lutheran usage of the feast, dating from Reformation times.⁹⁹ The Feast of the Transfiguration was observed in the East as early

⁹⁵Kliefoth, op. cit., p. 432.

⁹⁶Strodach, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

⁹⁷Alt, op. cit., p. 480.

⁹⁸Reed, op. cit., p. 449; The Lutheran Hymnal (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1941), p. 60.

⁹⁹Strodach, op. cit., p. 86.

as the sixth century.¹⁰⁰ It is included in a list of eleven major feasts of the seventh century. It was the subject of a festival sermon by Bishop Andrew of Crete in that same century.¹⁰¹ It is mentioned in a hymn ascribed to John Damascene (died 754).¹⁰² The Greeks celebrated the feast as Ἡ ἁγία μεταμόρφωσις τοῦ Κυρίου on August 6.¹⁰³ The feast was accepted slowly in the West.¹⁰⁴ In the middle of the twelfth century several Western monasteries began to introduce it, but it was not officially introduced into the calendar by the Western church until the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁵ From early times the festival had been observed on different dates in different churches in both East and West. In 1457 Pope Calixtus III ordered a universal observance of the feast on August 6 in commemoration of the victory of Cyprian and Hunyadi over the Turks at Belgrade on August 6, 1456.¹⁰⁶

Many of the Lutheran Church Orders at the time of the Reformation did not provide propers for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany. Those that did chose one of two sets of texts. Some appointed Titus 3:4-7 and Matthew 3:

¹⁰⁰Reed, op. cit., p. 86.

¹⁰¹Alt, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁰²Clarke, op. cit., p. 229.

¹⁰³Schuster, op. cit., p. 418.

¹⁰⁴Reed, op. cit., p. 449.

¹⁰⁵Alt, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁰⁶Kellner, op. cit., p. 105; Strodsch, op. cit., p. 86.

13-17, pericopes dealing with our and the Lord's Baptism. Others chose 2 Peter 1:16-21 and Matthew 17:1-13, the propers for the Feast of the Transfiguration.¹⁰⁷ Hagenhagen and Veit Dietrich chose the Transfiguration propers as texts for their sermons on the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, and the custom of observing Transfiguration on that Sunday soon became the general use in the Lutheran Church.¹⁰⁸ Heed¹⁰⁹ suggests two reasons why the Lutherans changed the date of the Transfiguration feast from August 6 to the last Sunday after Epiphany. First, since August 6 was usually a weekday, the Lutherans did not have the occasion to observe this rich feast. Secondly, the Lutherans regarded it as an appropriate climax to the season of Epiphany with its emphasis on manifestation.

The Roman Insertion of the Feast of the Holy Family

Besides the Lutheran insertion of Transfiguration into the Epiphany season, there has been one other change in the Epiphany season since the time of the Reformation. That is the Roman Church's insertion of the Feast of the Holy Family on the First Sunday after Epiphany. The Feast of the Holy Family is a late arrival in the Church Year. In 1663 Barbara d'Hillhouse founded the Association of the Holy Family at Montreal, and devotion to the Holy Family spread quite rapidly. In 1893 Leo XIII expressed his approval of a feast under this title and is even said to have composed part of the

¹⁰⁷Kliefoth, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

¹⁰⁸Heed, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

Office. Succeeding popes welcomed it as a means to restore the true spirit of family life. Benedict XV inserted the feast into the Roman calendar, and from 1921 on it has been fixed for this Sunday.¹¹⁰

Present Use of the Season by the Church

At the present time the Romans, the Anglicans, and the Lutherans appoint six Sundays after Epiphany.¹¹¹ The Lutheran rite is distinct in observing the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ on the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.¹¹² Both the Anglican and Roman rites observe that feast on August 6, and they concur in appointing the traditional propers for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.¹¹³ The American Prayer Book has departed from traditional usage by appointing the Gospel of the Baptism of Jesus for the Second Sunday after Epiphany and moving all the other Gospels back a Sunday, eliminating the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday.¹¹⁴ The Missal and Prayer Book use the propers for the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Sundays after Epiphany on the closing Sundays of the Trinity season when an early Easter date shortens the Epiphany season and lengthens the Trinity season.¹¹⁵ See Chapter III for the propers of the Sundays after Epiphany.

¹¹⁰Gueranger, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Rodrigue Cardinal Villeneuve, An Introduction to the Liturgical Year, translated by J. A. Otto Misensimmer (New York and Cincinnati: Frederick Pustet Co., 1946), pp. 51-52.

¹¹¹Reed, *op. cit.*, pp. 445-449.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, p. 449.

¹¹³Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 823; Shepherd, The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, p. 247.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 111-116.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 115; Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

The History of Candlemas

Its Eastern Origin

By the year 385 A. D. local interests at Jerusalem had already rounded off the Birthday Feast of Christ with a celebration of our Lord's Presentation in the Temple. February 15 was the date chosen for the celebration, since January 6 was the Jerusalem feast of the Nativity and since the Presentation in the Temple took place forty days after Christ's birth. When December 25 later was accepted as the Nativity of our Lord, the date for the Presentation of our Lord was put back to February 2.¹¹⁶ Etheria, or Sylvia as she is also known, the pilgrim from Gaul who visited Jerusalem in 385 A. D., recorded a description of the Feast of the Presentation as it was celebrated in Jerusalem. The celebration included a solemn procession, a sermon on St. Luke 2:22 ff., and a mass. She reports that the name of the feast was The Fortieth Day after Epiphany.¹¹⁷ From Jerusalem the feast spread throughout the church until Justinian the Emperor ordered its universal observance in 542 A. D. In Greek the feast came to be known as Hymanante, and in Latin as Occursus Domini, because the feast commemorated the meeting between the Child Jesus and Simeon and Anna.¹¹⁸ It is felt that a number of natural catastrophes induced the Emperor to prescribe a general observance of this "Feast of Encounter" so that the Christ might encounter

¹¹⁶Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

¹¹⁷Kellner, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 174.

those in need of mercy and help just as He once encountered Simon in the Temple.¹¹⁹

Its Adoption by the West

In Rome there is no evidence of the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord before around 700 A. D.¹²⁰ It was formerly believed that the feast was introduced in Rome by Pope Gelasius I to replace the heathen Lupercalia.¹²¹ This is no longer considered correct, and no connection between the Lupercalia and the Candlemas procession can be inferred.¹²² In the statutes of Sonnatius, Bishop of Reims (614-631) Candlemas is not included in the list of festivals.¹²³ In Spain it was not in the Lectionary of Silas (c.650); in Paris it was not in the Calendar of St. Genevieve (731-41).¹²⁴ The feast was introduced in Rome by the Syrian Pope Sergius I (687-701).¹²⁵ Sergius introduced the procession with which the feast has been associated ever since.¹²⁶ At Rome the Feast was kept as a feast of our Lord at first,¹²⁷

¹¹⁹Alt. op. cit., p. 49.

¹²⁰Dix, op. cit., p. 376.

¹²¹Alt, op. cit., pp. 45-50, holds this view.

¹²²Kellner, op. cit., p. 175; Dix, op. cit., p. 358, footnote 2.

¹²³Kellner, op. cit., p. 21.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 175.

¹²⁵Ibid.; Dix, op. cit., p. 358, footnote 2.

¹²⁶Kellner, op. cit., p. 175.

¹²⁷Dix, op. cit., p. 358, footnote 2.

but the fact that Sergius ordered the feast preceded by a penitential procession to the Liberian Basilica, just as was done on the three great festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary, laid the foundation for the introduction of the Marian character of the feast.¹²⁸ The Gelasian Sacramentary gives the feast its new name, Purificatio.¹²⁹ and eighth century Gaul kept it as a feast of our Lady.¹³⁰ The feast spread in the West chiefly from Rome.¹³¹ There is no mention of the rite of the blessing of candles, so intimately connected with today's feast, before the Sacramentary of Corbie in the tenth century. At Rome the rite of candle blessing is first mentioned in the Ordo of Benedict the Canon in the first half of the twelfth century.¹³²

Its Subsequent History in the Lutheran Church

Luther retained the Feast of Candlemas with its Epistle and Gospel and most of the Lutheran Churches followed his example. The Church Orders place it among "die hohen Hauptfeste des Herrn Christi," and most of them provide a whole day celebration of the feast. The names of the feast in the Church Orders are Lichtmess, Gefangung Christi, Præsentationis Christi.

¹²⁸Schuster, op. cit., III, 397.

¹²⁹Kellner, op. cit., p. 175.

¹³⁰Dix, op. cit., p. 358, footnote 2.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Schuster, op. cit., p. 399.

¹³³Kliefoth, op. cit., pp. 329-330.

¹³⁴Reed, op. cit., p. 498.

and Purification.¹³³ The Candlemas feast appears on the calendars of the Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman rites. The propers are identical.¹³⁴ For the propers of Candlemas see Chapter III.

History can reveal what the meaning of a feast or season of the Church Year has been in the past life of the church. In that way history can provide a valuable background for an understanding of the meaning of a feast or season of the Church Year in the present life of the church. Just for a full understanding of what a feast or season means in the present it is necessary to discover that meaning by a study of the progress of the feast or season. The third chapter undertakes a study of the progress of the Epiphany season in order to determine just what the meaning of the Epiphany season is in the present life of the church. The chapter begins first with the propers of the Feast of Epiphany, then with the propers of the season following the Feast of Epiphany, and finally with the propers of the Feast of Candlemas.

The Propers of the Feast of Epiphany
Relation to the Christian Propers

Epiphany is closely related to meaning to Christians. In fact, both seasons are part of the season known as Christmastide or the Christmas cycle, which extends from the beginning of Advent to the Festival of Epiphany.¹ In

¹ Luther H. Good, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947), p. 105; *Prax Parochia, Die Kirche des Volkes* (Eighth edition, Neudruckausgabe, Wien: Ropysch-Verlag, 1947), p. 73; Otto Harig, *Liturgie der Kirche*, translated by Robert Holmstedt (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1924), p. 15; Henry H. Stenford, Jr., *The Sacred Seasons of the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1911), p. 107.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPER OF THE EPIPHANY SEASON

History can reveal what the meaning of a feast or season of the Church Year has been in the past life of the church. In that way history can provide a valuable background for an understanding of the meaning of a feast or season of the Church Year in the present life of the church. But for a full understanding of what a feast or season means in the present it is necessary to discover that meaning by a study of the propers of the feast or season. The third chapter undertakes a study of the propers of the Epiphany season in order to determine just what the meaning of the Epiphany season is in the present life of the church. The chapter deals first with the propers of the Feast of Epiphany, then with the propers of the season following the Feast of Epiphany, and finally with the propers of the Feast of Candlemas.

The Propers of the Feast of Epiphany

Relation to the Christmas Propers

Epiphany is closely related in meaning to Christmas. In fact, both feasts are part of the season known as Christmastide or the Christmas cycle, which extends from the beginning of Advent to the Festival of Epiphany.¹ In

¹Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1947), p. 445; Pius Parach, Das Jahr Des Heiles (Thirteenth edition; Klosterneuburg, Wien: Bernina-Verlag, 1947), p. 79; Otto Haering, Living With The Church, translated by Rembert Gulanski (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1930), p. 15; Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 107.

the Church Year viewed as a historical or a chronological year Christmas and Epiphany together represent the time of Christ's appearance in this world. The two feasts are preceded by the Advent season, which represents the time prior to Christ's birth, and are followed by Lent, which represents the time of Christ's ministry climaxing in His resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Comforter. The Trinity or Pentecost season represents the time of the life of the church to the end of the world.² However, it is possible to view Christmas and Epiphany not only as the commemoration of Christ's appearance in time many years ago but also as the anticipation of His appearance in glory. Then Christmas and Epiphany are viewed as feasts of Christ's parousia.³ Epiphany especially lends itself to the theme of parousia:

Beachten wir, in Lateinischen heisst es adventum, in Griechischen epiphancian. Die volle Erfüllung des Advents ist also das Fest Epiphanie. Wenn Weihnachten vielleicht noch stark kindheitsgeschichtlich eingestellt ist (es gibt allerdings auch viele eschatologische Stellen), so ist Epiphanie ein Parusiefest, "die Erscheinung der Herrlichkeit des grossen Gottes und unseres Heilands Jesus Christus."⁴

And so, "arrival" is the theme of the Christmas-Epiphany season. It is the arrival of Christ in time in anticipation of His arrival in glory and as a symbol of the need of His arrival in our hearts.⁵ With this theme in mind Epiphany is viewed as the central, climactic feast of the Christmas cycle

²Parusch, op. cit., p. 7.

³Ibid., pp. 7-9.

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵Ibid., pp. 13-15.

with Christmas and Candlemas the two planets in the cycle.⁶

Although the Christmas and Epiphany feasts are very similar in content and purpose, there is nevertheless a difference between the feasts:

The Feast of Epiphany is the continuation of the mystery of Christmas; but it appears on the Calendar of the Church with its own special character. Its very name, which signifies Manifestation, implies that it celebrates the apparition of God to his creatures.⁷

The feast has its own proper object and its own clearly defined liturgical splendor.⁸ On Christmas Christ was revealed to His own people, the Jews; on Epiphany the Gentiles share in His revelation. And so, it has been stated that Christmas is the private family feast of Christendom, while Epiphany is the world feast of the catholic church.⁹ For this reason Epiphany, though related to Christmas, nevertheless initiates a distinct advance in the Church Year's teaching.¹⁰

Main Emphases

There are a number of themes which appear over and over again in the

⁶H. A. Reinhold, "Reevaluating Epiphany," Orate Fratres, LXV (January, 1951), 74-75.

⁷Abbot Guéranger, The Liturgical Year, translated from the French by Laurence Shepherd (Fourth edition; Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1951), III, 107.

⁸Rodrique Cardinal Villeneuve, An Introduction to the Liturgical Year, translated by J. A. Otto Eisenhammer (New York and Cincinnati: Frederick Pustet Co., 1946), p. 45.

⁹Parsch, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁰Paul Zeller Strodsch, The Church Year (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1924), p. 60.

Epiphany propera. One of the most obvious and important is the theme of manifestation, from which the feast gets its name.¹¹ The feast uses a historical event out of the childhood of Jesus to reveal Him to the world as the Son of God.¹² The very first words of the Introit, "Behold, the Lord, the Ruler, hath come," are a reference to the manifestation of Christ to the wise men from the East as their Lord and King. The Collect addresses God, "who . . . didst manifest Thine only-begotten Son." The Epistle is a prophecy of the manifestation of the Messiah to the world. The Gradual echoes the manifestation idea of the Epistle: "the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." It also introduces the manifestation idea in the Gospel: "We have seen His star in the East." It is the manifestation of Christ not only as Savior and Redeemer but as Lord and King:

The entire liturgy of today's Mass treats of the royal dignity of Him who has appeared and revealed Himself. Indeed, the feast of Christmas already stresses this dignity. But occasionally it also permits us a glimpse of the divine Child in the manger (*Parvulus natus est nobis*), and the magic of His charms entrances us. Today everything has the imprint of Christ's kingship and summons the entire world to pay homage to Him.¹³

The emphasis on the glory of Christ's manifestation is also present in the Proper Preface for Epiphany.¹⁴

¹¹Ildefonso Schuster, *The Sacramentary*, translated from the Italian by Arthur Levelis-Marks (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924), I, 402; Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 107; Strodach, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹²Parsch, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹³Dominic Johner, *The Chants of the Vatican Gradual*, translated from the German by Monks of Saint John's Abbey (Collegeville, Minnesota: Saint John's Abbey Press, 1940), p. 79.

¹⁴Martin B. Hellriegel, *Vines and Branches* (St. Louis, Missouri: Pio Decimo Press, 1948), p. 63.

Traditionally the theme of manifestation on Epiphany was illustrated by three pictures from the life of Christ: 1) the adoration of the wise men, 2) the baptism of Jesus, 3) Christ's first miracle at the wedding of Cana.¹⁵ Parsch¹⁶ points out that the presentation of these illustrations is far more vivid in the office of the feast than in its Mass. The Mass devotes itself almost exclusively to the idea of the Magi, whereas the office provides a thorough and dramatic treatment of all three themes. The Benedictus antiphon, for example, reveals the unity of the threefold manifestation of the feast in a few skillfully blended pictures:¹⁷

This day hath the Church been joined to her heavenly Spouse, for Christ hath cleansed her crimes in the Jordan; with gifts the Magi hasten to the royal nuptials, and the guests are gladdened with wine made from water, alleluia.¹⁸

The three manifestations are similarly blended in the Magnificat antiphon of Vespers.¹⁹ Whereas the threefold illustration of the manifestation is still present in the propers for the office, the propers for the mass of the feast deal only with the visit of the Magi,²⁰ and that is the feast's

¹⁵Parsch, op. cit., p. 79; Gueranger, op. cit., p. 120; Emeric Lawrence, The Week With Christ (Canada: Fides Press, 1950), p. 64.

¹⁶Pius Parsch, The Breviary Explained, translated from the German by William Hayden and Carl Haegerl (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co., 1952), p. 251.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁸A Short Breviary, edited by Monks of St. John's Abbey (Third edition; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1944), p. 344.

¹⁹Parsch, The Breviary Explained, p. 252; For the Antiphon see A Short Breviary, p. 340.

²⁰Parsch, The Breviary Explained, p. 251.

main emphasis.²¹

In addition to the theme of manifestation missions, especially foreign missions, is also an emphasis of the Epiphany feast.²² This is due to the appearance of the heathen sages from the East to worship the Christ Child, as it is recorded in the Gospel for the feast. The Collect speaks of a manifestation to the Gentiles. The Epistle and Gradual picture heathen nations streaming to the Christ. Emering²³ writes:

Since our ancestors were heathen, we celebrate in this feast our own calling to Christianity. On this day we should give thanks to God for the privilege of having the Catholic faith. Let us remember also the poor heathen, and help them by participating in mission activity.

The adoration of the Magi and their presentation of gifts to the Christ Child in the Gospel for the feast provide the theme of adoration and worship present also in other propers of the feast.²⁴ In fact, the Mass of Epiphany has been described as an offertory procession with the Magi as our leaders.²⁵

²¹Gusrangar, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110; Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52; Fernand Cabrol, *The Year's Liturgy* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourns, 1938), p. 89; Strodach, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 64.

²³*Op. cit.*, p. 16.

²⁴See also the Introit, Epistle, and Gradual.

²⁵Parsch, *Das Jahr Das Heiles*, p. 80.

Light is a theme of the Epiphany feast propers.²⁶ The Collect refers to the star which led the wise men in the Gospel. The Epistle begins: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come." The light motif is reflected again in the Gradual and Gospel.

All of the propers point forward to a final Epiphany at the end of time. The collect does so especially with its plea "that we . . . may have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead."

The Propers²⁷ in Detail

Introit

Behold, the Lord, the Ruler, hath come; and the kingdom
and the power and the glory are in His hand.

Psalm. Give the King Thy judgments, O God: and Thy
righteousness unto the King's Son.

Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest Thine
only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that
we, who know Thee now by faith, may after this life have
the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead; through the same
Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

Isaiah 60:1-6

²⁶ Stephen Bendes, "The Epiphany Light," Una Sancta, VI (Christmastide, 1945), 7-9.

²⁷ The Lutheran Hymnal (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, c.1941), p. 58.

Gradual

All they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense: and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord.

V. Arise, shine, O Jerusalem: for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

V. We have been His star in the East: and are come with gifts to worship the Lord. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

The propers of the feast are a model example of the classic formula of the Mass. Each part serves its correct purpose. The Introit fulfills its original purpose of an entrance song. The two lessons are closely related in a prophecy-fulfillment relationship. The Gradual picks out one theme from both lessons to serve its original purpose as a bridge between the two lessons. The Collect does its task of summarizing the thought and purpose of the day.²⁸

The Introit ushers in this majestic festival in tones of uplifting joy and praise.²⁹ It announces the theme of manifestation, of Epiphany, of Theophany.

The Church proclaims, in the opening chant of the Mass, the arrival of the great King for whom the whole earth was in expectation, and at whose Birth the Magi are come to Jerusalem, there to consult the prophecies.³⁰

It announces the fulfillment of Advent and its longing for the appearance

²⁸Parach, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 82.

²⁹Strodach, op. cit., p. 63.

³⁰Gueranger, op. cit., p. 120.

of the promised Deliverer:

How the centuries watched for the arrival of this King and how ardent were their longings! How often have not the prayers and chants of Advent cried: *Veni Domine!* What a height did not these yearnings attain in the great G-antiphons immediately preceding the feast of Christmas! . . . this *Veni* acts as a prelude to our *Hocce*. Now the sighs have been heard and the longing has been stilled. Now we hear re-echo throughout the land: "Behold the Lord the Ruler is come." But he does not come emptyhanded. He bears kingdoms in His hands: the kingdom of truth and of grace and the guarantee for the kingdom of glory. He gives us a share in His power He gives us the power . . . to become children of God and therefore co-heirs of His kingdom.³¹

The antiphon of the Introit is either an apocryphal or a liturgical composition and imitates the doxology of the Lord's Prayer.³² The Introit psalm verse is the first verse of Psalm 72, the Royal Psalm,³³ or the Psalm of the Three Kings.³⁴ It keynotes the theme of the service³⁵ and harmonizes with the Gospel.³⁶ It is because of the use of this psalm as a prophecy of the visit of the Magi that the Magi, priests of the astronomical religion

³¹Johner, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³²Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

³³Johner, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁴Parach, *Das Jahr Des Heiles*, p. 80.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

of Persia,³⁷ came to be known as "kings."³⁸ John³⁹ meditates on the relationship of the Introit to the Gospel in the following way:

If today kings, princes in the realm of knowledge and research, find no rest until they come to Him, until they prostrate themselves before Him, humble their intelligence and will under His scepter, and with an earnest faith adore Him, the Child, then we see how this Babe reveals Himself as a royal Ruler, how He captures the hearts of men and fills them with happiness.

The Collect, especially in the original, draws an interesting comparison between the wise men led by the sight of the star and ourselves being led to the vision of God by the gift of faith.⁴⁰ The Collect is an explanation of the mystery of the Feast of Epiphany: We are like the wise men; we are led by the star of faith through the wilderness of life; we are hastening to Christ, not as Child, but as majestic King at His return. This being led to "the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead" is actualized in the Eucharist of Epiphany, where we are given a manifestation of God like that of the Magi.⁴¹ The Collect places a strong emphasis on the final Epiphany of Christ to see that living Light which will enlighten us for all eternity.⁴²

³⁷Shepherd, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

³⁸Ibid.; Heinrich Alt, Das Christliche Gultus (Second enlarged edition; Berlin: G. W. F. Müller, 1860), II, 321; Friedrich Strauss, Das evangelische Kirchenjahr in seinem Zusammenhange (Berlin: Jona's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1850), p. 138.

³⁹op. cit., p. 80.

⁴⁰Shepherd, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

⁴¹Parson, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 80.

⁴²Guranger, op. cit., p. 120.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Yet faith provisions it all - and faith at last will realize it, will have come to fruition. When God garners me and my faith, "then shall I see God" and "behold the King in his glory." This will be the everlasting Epiphany.⁴³

The word "fruition" literally means "enjoyment" rather than the more common meaning of "realization," and so indicates that our vision of Christ in His majesty will be far more glorious than the Wise Men's sight of Him in His lowliness.⁴⁴ The Collect is a 1549 Prayer Book translation of the Gelasian original.⁴⁵

The Epistle is one of the few Old Testament selections in the Church Year.⁴⁶ The light theme, already announced in the Collect, shines with all its might in the Epistle's vision of the Messianic empire.⁴⁷ Parsch⁴⁸ sees in the description of the Epistle a picture of an oriental parousia of a king into a city. He describes the scene in the following way:

Die Gottesstadt wird illuminiert, denn der König hält seine „Parusie“, seinem Königsbesuch; da erstrahlt die Stadt vom Lichte Gottes, indes Finsternis die ganze Erde bedeckt; und

⁴³Paul Zeller Strodach, The Collect for the Day (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1939), p. 52.

⁴⁴Ibid.; Shepard, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

⁴⁵Reed, op. cit., p. 446.

⁴⁶Strodach, The Church Year, p. 63.

⁴⁷Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 80.

⁴⁸Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 63.

man strömen die Heidenvölker herbei zum göttlichen Licht, um fortan in seinem Glanze zu wandeln; und sie kommen mit Geschenke herbei, mit Königsgaben, Gold und Weihrauch.

The Epistle is rich in the themes of Epiphany. Beside light, it emphasizes the missions aspect of Epiphany. It pictures humanity's response of joy and worship and praise to the Lord's manifestation.⁴⁹ Its relation to the Gospel as a prophecy of the visit of the Magi is obvious,⁵⁰ especially so in the phrase: "They shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praise of the Lord."

The Gradual of the Feast of Epiphany is the perfect example of what a Gradual should be. It fulfills the classic purpose of a Gradual: by echoing the Epistle and foreshadowing the Gospel, it builds a bridge between the two lessons.⁵¹ The Gradual verse repeats the two main thoughts of the Epistle: Light and Gifts. The Alleluiah verse picks out the main verse from the Gospel, and it also deals with the same two thoughts: Light and Gifts.⁵² Johner⁵³ finds the main themes of Epiphany bound together in the Gradual verse - missions, manifestation, light, worship and praise:

⁴⁹Schuster, op. cit., p. 402.

⁵⁰Strodach, The Church Year, p. 63.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 64; Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 81.

⁵²Ibid.; Johner, op. cit., p. 81.

⁵³Op. cit., p. 82.

"All they from Saba shall come." To these gumms we also, who with the Magi have been called to the true faith, belong. We were enlightened in Holy Baptism, having entirely become light; at that time the glory of the Lord appeared above us while countless others still groveled in the darkness of infidelity. Hence we also bring our gifts - a will of gold and the incense of adoration. Let us likewise offer to the Lord our songs of praise and fervent thanksgiving.

Commenting on the words of the Alleluia verse, "We have seen His star in the East," Schuster⁵⁴ remarks: "It is always faith that lights up our path to God, so that without it, it is not possible for us to please him." The Gospel is the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Epistle.⁵⁵ Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the eternal picture of the prophet in the Epistle has its first unfolding and illustration in the story of the Magi in the Gospel.⁵⁶ Lawrence⁵⁷ points out the character of the worship of the Magi. He says that they do not question how this child can be their King and Savior but simply worship Him by offering themselves through the offering of their gifts. The gifts offered to the Christ Child have been interpreted in a number of ways. One way is to consider the gold as the symbol of the kingship of Christ, and the myrrh as the symbol of the humanity of Christ.⁵⁸ Another interpretation is to see Kingly power in the gold, the High Priest in the incense, and the burial of Christ in

⁵⁴Op. cit., p. 403.

⁵⁵Strodach, The Church Year, p. 64.

⁵⁶Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heilen, p. 81.

⁵⁷Op. cit., p. 52.

⁵⁸Caspar Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal (Saint Paul, Minnesota: E. H. Lohmann Co., c.1949), p. 68.

the myrrh; this view depicts Christ as King, High Priest, and Man.

St. Gregory found gold symbolic of wisdom, incense symbolic of prayer, and myrrh symbolic of the mortification of the flesh. Strasser⁵⁹ combines the last two views; he says the three gifts symbolize that we are to bring all the powers of our intellect to Christ our King, the incense of our prayers to Christ our High Priest, and the Myrrh of our sufferings and labors to Christ the Man-God. Strodach⁶⁰ calls attention to the contrast in the Gospel between the Magi and the Jews:

Mark the contrast in the Gospel - "His own" - of course the "expectant" Israel - they know who is meant when the Wise Men ask; they know where He is to be found - but do they go? Epiphany to them? But the Gentiles come to the light, and kings to the brightness of His rising! Small wonder that this Day has, since early times, marked the call and the coming in of the Gentiles - the heathen, and that "Foreign Missions" find such a welcome place in this season.

Schuster⁶¹ explains that the Epiphany feast is not to be primarily a consideration of a past event but a reliving of that event in the life of each worshiper in the present:

The interior life of a Christian is the reproduction of the life of Jesus; thus the object of the Church in placing before us the annual cycle of feasts is not merely to commemorate the great historical epochs in the history of our redemption but also to reproduce in our souls their spiritual teaching. Hence in . . . this feast of the Epiphany we do not so much adore the Christ who showed himself twenty centuries ago to the Magi, but rather the Christ who has revealed himself to us, too, who are now living. In a word, it is not alone the historical Epiphany

⁵⁹Bernard Strasser, With Christ Through The Year (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1947), p. 91.

⁶⁰The Church Year, p. 64.

⁶¹Op. cit., p. 404.

which we desire to celebrate, but we associate ourselves also with that other subjective and personal Epiphany which is manifested in the soul of every believer to whom Jesus appears by means of our holy Faith.

The Roman Missal gives directions for the worshipers to genuflect during the reading of the words "and fell down and worshipped him" in the Gospel.⁶² Parsch⁶³ says this is an expression of the fact that the church is not only to hear the story but to imitate the action of the Magi.

The Propers of the Season

Following the Feast of Epiphany

The Propers in General

The season following the Feast of Epiphany is an extension of the Christmas cycle. The season comprises the forty days of the purification of the Virgin Mary and ends on February 2 (no matter how early or late Septuagesima may be) with the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord. This season from December 25 to February 2 has often been referred to as "the month of the Infant Jesus."⁶⁴ It is considered an extension of the Christmas cycle because it develops more fully the central motif of the Christmas season: God made manifest to man as man.⁶⁵ Note that it is a development of the Christmas-Epiphany motif:

⁶²Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 67.

⁶³Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 81.

⁶⁴Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 98.

⁶⁵Strasser, op. cit., p. 98.

. . . the Feast and its Gospel announce The Epiphany, the subsequent Sundays contributing Epiphanies varying in both character and purpose, and developing this general theme through them.⁶⁶

On the Epiphany feast Christ was manifested to the Gentiles and received and acclaimed by them. On the First Sunday after the Epiphany the Gospel reveals His own awareness of His unique relation to the Father. The miracle at the wedding of Cana in the Gospel for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany reveals Him as the Lord and brings about the response of faith in His disciples. The miracle of subsequent Sundays continues to reveal His power and majesty until the manifestation is completed in the burst of glory of the Transfiguration on the Last Sunday after the Epiphany.⁶⁷

Besides extending the Christmas cycle, this season following the Feast of Epiphany also serves as an intermediate season between the Christmas feasts and Lent,⁶⁸ or stated differently, between the Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle.⁶⁹ The first Sundays of the season are closely associated in thought with Christmas and Epiphany. Toward the end of the season we come face to face with the Lord as Judge, who is about to enter into combat with the powers of darkness.⁷⁰ In the Lutheran Church the Feast of Transfigura-

⁶⁶Strodach, The Church Year, p. 75.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 63.

⁶⁸Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 86.

⁶⁹Wilhelm Loche, Neu- u. Schule und Kirchenbuch fuer Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses (Stuttgart: S. G. Liesching, 1859), II, 44.

⁷⁰Strasser, op. cit., p. 97.

tion on the last Sunday of the season provides a springboard to go from the season of joy to the season of humiliation with the command, "This is my beloved Son, . . . hear ye him."⁷¹ Because of its close connection with Christmas and Epiphany, joy is the dominant note of the season.⁷² The jubilation of the season expresses itself in the use of psalms of joy as liturgical texts, like Psalms 66, 97, and 100.⁷³

The season after the Feast of Epiphany continues the main themes presented on the feast itself. The manifestation theme continues in the Gospels. On the Second Sunday after Epiphany He appears as Nourisher, on the Third as Savior, on the Fourth as Victor, on the Fifth as Longsuffering Judge,⁷⁴ and on the Sixth as Transfigured Lord. The manifestation theme is also continued in the Epistles of the season, since they are exhortations to believers to manifest the life of their Epiphany Lord in their lives.⁷⁵ There is in this manifestation of Christ by the believers a continuation of the missions emphasis of the Epiphany feast. The theme of worship and praise is also continued, especially in the Introits and Graduals of the season.⁷⁶

⁷¹Strodach, The Church Year, p. 63.

⁷²Parach, Das Jahr Das Heiles, pp. 86-87; Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 54.

⁷³Cabrol, op. cit., p. 96.

⁷⁴Parach, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 87.

⁷⁵Haering, op. cit., p. 19.

⁷⁶Strodach, The Church Year, p. 74.

The light theme is especially evident in the propers of the Feast of the Transfiguration.

In the Introits of the season Christ stands before us in all His glory as King and we adore Him.⁷⁷ The Introits for the most part are only loosely connected with the particular teaching of the day; sometimes the connection is confined to a phrase only. During this season the Introits exhibit their broadest function, in that they give a general festival tone to the Church's worship, inspired by no single event but by the great all-revealing glory of the Epiphany.⁷⁸

For this reason the Introits are calls to, and ascriptions of, worship; the worshipping Church joining her praises with a rejoicing creation and an adoring Heavenly Host; and in this sense their place in the harmony is assured.⁷⁹

The Collects of the Season are petitions for divine grace. The Epistles stress the strengthening of God's kingdom in our hearts and point out the effects which the manifestations of our Lord should have in the hearts of the faithful.⁸⁰ While the Epistles of the season reveal Christ in us and by us, the Gospels of the season reveal Christ for us.⁸¹ The Gospels develop the progressive teaching of the period. In many cases the definite purpose of a Sunday depends on the Gospel alone.⁸²

⁷⁷William J. Lallou and Sister Josefa Maria, The Missal and Holy Mass (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1932), p. 144.

⁷⁸Strodach, The Church Year, p. 74.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Lallou, op. cit., p. 144; Fernand Gabriel, Liturgical Prayer: Its History and Spirit, translated from the French by a Benedictine of Stanbrook (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1925), p. 160.

⁸¹Strodach, The Church Year, p. 67.

⁸²Ibid., p. 74.

Wenn wir die Evangelien der sechs Sonntage nach Erscheinung auf einen Nenner bringen wollen, so ergibt sich eine erhebliche Betrachtung: Der grosse unabhangige Gott ist in Menschengewande zu uns armen Menschen gekommen, er wollte Emmanuel, d. h. Gott mit und unter uns sein Der Glanz der Gottheit hatte uns abgeschreckt; darum ist Gott im Gewande der Menschennatur unter uns erschienen; er wollte unser Bruder und Freund sein. Wir sollen zu ihm in allen unseren Nuten kommen. Er aber wollte die ganze Tragik des Menschen kennenlernen.⁸³

The Propers for the First Sunday After the Epiphany⁸⁴

Introit⁸⁵

On a throne, high and lifted up, I saw a Man sitting,
whom the multitude of angels adore, singing
together; Behold, His dominion endureth for-
ever.

Psalm. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye
lands: serve the Lord with gladness.

Collect

O Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to receive the
prayers of Thy people who call upon Thee; and
grant that they may both perceive and know what
things they ought to do and also may have grace
and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through
Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

⁸³Parach, Das Jahr Des Heiles. pp. 87-88.

⁸⁴The Lutheran Hymnal. pp. 58-59.

⁸⁵The Lutheran Hymnal. p. 58, provides a choice of two Introits.
Lutheran Church Calendar (Eire, Pennsylvania: Ashby Co., c.1952) prescribes
this Introit.

Epistle

Romans 12:1-5

Gradual

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who
only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be
His glorious name forever.

V. The mountains shall bring peace to Thy people;
and the hills righteousness. Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

V. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands:
serve the Lord with gladness. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Luke 2:41-52

The First Sunday After the Epiphany constructs a bridge from the
childhood of Jesus to His Ministry. The Epiphany feast manifests Him to
us as an infant; the Octave is the commemoration of His baptism, and the
Second Sunday after the Epiphany commemorates His first miracle; in between,
the First Sunday After the Epiphany presents Him to us as a Child in the
Temple. He is still a Child, though aware of His calling in this world.⁸⁶
Christ's own claim to be God's Son and the holy will of God are the two
main thoughts of this set of propers.⁸⁷ The theme of God's will begins
in the Collect, continues in the Epistle, and stands out best of all in the
Gospel.⁸⁸ Because of the strong emphasis on God's will, Strode⁸⁹ suggests

⁸⁶ Parsch, *Das Jahr Des Heiles*, pp. 82-83.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁸⁸ Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁸⁹ *The Church Year*, p. 69.

that a fitting title for this day would be "The Epiphany of Loving Duty."

The theme of manifestation of Christ begins in the Introit and is fully revealed in Christ's consciousness of His relation to God in the Gospel:

This "Man sitting upon a high throne, whom a multitude of angels adore" (Introit), is the same Divine Child that the Gospel shows us "sitting in the midst of doctors For the first time He makes known to the Jews that God is "His Father" (Gospel).⁸⁰

The Introit relates the scene of Christ in the Temple to the theophanies granted young Isaiah and the aged St. John.⁹¹ It describes a magnificent Epiphany picture: Christ is on His throne, surrounded by His angels, ruling eternally.⁹² The psalmist invites us to join in the universal praise.⁹³

It is the Kingdom of the divine Infant that the Church again proclaims in the opening Canticle of the Mass for the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany. She sings the praises of her Emmanuel's Throne, and takes part with the angels who hymn the glory of Jesus' eternal Empire. Let us do the same, and adore the King of Ages, in His Epiphany.⁹⁴

It is the spirit of adoration which pulsates through the Introit:

Gone are the shepherds who knelt before the manger, departed the Magi who had there adored and offered their gifts. But the spirit of adoration which animated all of them has remained. It continues to thrive in the Church. This supplies the theme for the Introits of the first, second, and third Sundays after Epiphany. Our adoration must be like mighty granite blocks, over which immense vaults raise themselves.

⁸⁰Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 72.

⁹¹Knob, op. cit., p. 446.

⁹²Furck, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 84.

⁹³Knob, op. cit., p. 446.

⁹⁴Queranger, op. cit., p. 148.

resounding with the joyous songs of praise. We are not only to prostrate ourselves trembling before the divine majesty; each of these Introits invites us to sing and to rejoice, for we find these words prominent: *adoret* and *psallat*.⁹⁵

The Introit is a compilation of Isaiah 6:1b, Revelation 19:6, Psalm 100:1-2a.⁹⁶

The Collect's petition to know and carry out the Father's will is a reflection of the Church's desire to follow the example of her Lord's devotion to His Father's will, as that example is revealed in today's Gospel.⁹⁷ The Collect's message impresses on us that fulfilling the will of God is the greatest lesson of our life.⁹⁸ Shepherd⁹⁹ points out that it contains a general teaching on the meaning of prayer:

Not all of our prayers are according to God's will, so that not all of them are answered with a 'yes'. One of the purposes of prayer is to determine what God's will is, that is, to learn what we 'ought to do' - and then we should seek His strength to accomplish it. Also, it is possible that we may know what God's will is, but have no will to perform it.

The Collect occurs in the Gregorian Sacramentary for one of the Sundays after Christmas. Alcuin in his supplement to the Sacramentary appointed it for this Sunday.¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that it was in relation to this Collect that Celestine I made the famous aphorism: Legem credendi

⁹⁵Jahner, op. cit., p. 88.

⁹⁶Reed, op. cit., p. 446.

⁹⁷Strodach, The Church Year, p. 68.

⁹⁸Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 84.

⁹⁹op. cit., pp. 108-109.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

lex statuat grandi.¹⁰¹

The Epistle, the first of four selections from the concluding section of Romans, is probably the survival of a lectio continua which was used in the early church before the development of an Epiphany season.¹⁰² The Epistle is related to the will of God theme of this Sunday in that it talks about carrying out the will of God when it tells us that our bodies must be a living, holy, God-pleasing sacrifice.¹⁰³ It outlines for us a devotion like that of the Boy Jesus in the Temple.¹⁰⁴ Because this Sunday is within the Octave of Epiphany, Guenzinger¹⁰⁵ finds a relation between the offering of ourselves to God and the offering of the Magi.

The Gradual echoes the Epiphany theme.¹⁰⁶ The Church returns to her praise of the ineffable wonders of a God with us: Peace and righteousness have come down from heaven, to take up their abode on our mountains and hills. The Gradual is a compilation of Psalm 72:18-19a, 3 and Psalm 100:1-2a.

The Gospel is a revelation of God in the boyhood of Jesus. The first

¹⁰¹W. K. Lowther Clarke, editor, Liturgy and Worship: A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936), p. 387.

¹⁰²Reed, op. cit., p. 446; Shepherd, op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁰³Reed, op. cit., p. 446; Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 84.

¹⁰⁴Strodach, The Church Year, p. 67.

¹⁰⁵Op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁰⁶Lawrence, op. cit., p. 60.

words we hear Him speak reveal Him as God's Son and reveal the lesson of His life: to fulfill the will of God.¹⁰⁷ The account of Christ's visit to the Temple is the natural sequence to the infancy stories of Christmas and Epiphany¹⁰⁸ and connects those stories to Christ's Life of Ministry.¹⁰⁹ But the Gospel is more than a biographical link. This is Epiphany, and His first words reveal His consciousness of who He is.¹¹⁰ Christ's answer to His mother in the Gospel is intended "to remind those present that in the midst of mankind His mission is divine."¹¹¹

The Propers for the Second Sunday After the Epiphany¹¹²

Introit

All the earth shall worship Thee: and shall sing unto
Thee, O God.
They shall sing to Thy name: O Thou Most High.
Psalm. Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:
sing forth the honor of His name, make His
praise glorious.

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things
in heaven and earth, mercifully hear the supplications
of Thy people and grant us Thy peace all the days of our

¹⁰⁷Parach, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 84.

¹⁰⁸Shepherd, op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁰⁹Strodach, The Church Year, p. 67.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Gabrol, The Year's Liturgy, p. 90.

¹¹²The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 59.

life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

Romans 12:6-16

Gradual

The Lord sent His Word and healed them; and delivered them from their destructions.

- V. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness; and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- V. Praise ye Him, all His angels; Praise ye Him, all His hosts. Hallelujah!

Gospel

John 2:1-11

The propers for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany revolve about the third of the three manifestations that have traditionally made up the Epiphany feast: the Manifestation at the Wedding of Cana.¹¹³ It is therefore in every sense a "manifestation" Sunday.¹¹⁴ The propers derive their meaning from their association with the Gospel account of the miracle performed by Christ at the wedding of Cana. In the Gospel Christ reveals Himself as God by the miracle He performs, and His disciples believe in Him.¹¹⁵ But it is the Epiphany not only of His glory but also of His mercy. Strodach¹¹⁶ suggests that the day might be called "the Epiphany of Sympathy" because the Gospel manifests Christ's sympathy for us and the Epistle exhorts us to sympathy for others. The participation of Christ in a wedding

¹¹³Parsch, Das Jahr Der Heiles, p. 89.

¹¹⁴Hellriegel, op. cit., p. 74.

¹¹⁵Queranger, op. cit., p. 243.

¹¹⁶The Church Year, p. 73.

feast leads Strauss¹¹⁷ to see the day as "Die Erscheinung Christi im häuslichen Leben." He goes on to point out that the day shows Christ as:

der Hohenpriester in Hause, der Alles heiligt, was in diesem tiefsten und innerlichsten Gebiet des menschlichen Lebens gehört.¹¹⁸

The Introit (Psalm 66:4.1.2) expresses how the Church wants us to feel about our Lord's Epiphanies.¹¹⁹ In the Introit we pay homage to and adore the God made manifest for us in the Gospel of the day.¹²⁰ We use superlatives to extol the wonder of Christ revealed to us as Lord of Creation.¹²¹

The Introit proclaims the joy of this day, which shows us human nature espoused to the son of the eternal Father. Surely the earth will henceforth surrender itself wholly to the love and praise of this sacred Name which, in the Marriage Feast, has become that of the Sons of Adam.¹²²

But Johnex¹²³ points out that the fact that all nations do not adore the revealed Lord should make us sing the Introit song with so much more reverence and joy to make up for the world's lack of praise.

The Collect is a petition for peace: peace between God and us and

¹¹⁷Op. cit., p. 145.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 146.

¹¹⁹Lawrence, op. cit., p. 64.

¹²⁰Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heilen, p. 90.

¹²¹Strodach, The Church Year, p. 71.

¹²²Queranger, op. cit., p. 243.

¹²³Op. cit., p. 88.

peace between Christians.¹²⁴ The Collect addresses its petition to God as the governor of all things in heaven and earth. There is possibly in this address a reflection of the miracle performed by Jesus in the Gospel,¹²⁵ although there is otherwise no connection between the Collect and the main idea of the Mass.¹²⁶ Strodach¹²⁷ reflects on the plea for peace:

Grant us Thy peace all the days of our life Order, restrain, control with Thy almighty power all that destroys Thy gift of peace, that "the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" and "the peace that passeth all understanding" possess our hearts. And is it not true, that when God rules and governs, there is peace? Does this many centuries old prayer fit in today? Do we need this plea? Troubled hearts, troubled lives, troubled homes, troubled cities, troubled nation, troubled world! "In this world ye shall have tribulation" . . . "My peace give I unto you." "The Lord will bless His people with peace."

The Collect is from the Gelasian Sacramentary and is a free translation by Grammer in 1549.¹²⁸ The plea for peace stems from the disturbed times of the Völkerwanderung in the sixth century.¹²⁹

The Epistle is the continuation of the Epistle for the preceding Sunday. It deals with the Christian community and with the responsibility of the individual members of the community to use their appointed gifts for the common good.¹³⁰ Some commentators¹³¹ find a relation in the idea

¹²⁴H. C. Massengor, The Sunday Collects (Second edition; London: Sands and Co. Ltd., 1946), p. 26.

¹²⁵Strodach, The Church Year, p. 71.

¹²⁶Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 90.

¹²⁷The Church Year, p. 58.

¹²⁸Need, op. cit., p. 447.

¹²⁹Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 90; Shepherd, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

¹³⁰Strodach, The Church Year, p. 72; Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 90; Schuster, op. cit., p. 410.

¹³¹Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 90; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 67.

of the community with the Gospel wedding-family theme: just as life together follows a wedding, so living together follows the Eucharist, and the Epistle gives directions for that community and family life.

In a single sentence the Gradual (Psalm 107:20-21; 148:2) summarizes the purpose of our Lord's Epiphany. He came to heal us and to deliver us. It urges the inhabitants of heaven and earth to join in praising the Lord "for His goodness." John¹³² sees in the past tense "sent" the Epiphany fulfillment of the Advent imperative "send":

. . . the present misit is a fulfillment of our cry: Mitte Domine. quoniam missurus es The Lord has sent His Word, His eternal Word, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; this Word is Jesus, the Savior; He heals our wounds and saves us from destruction.

The Introit had invited the entire world to adore and to praise God; in the Gradual the eternal Word of God Himself fulfills this service of thanksgiving; in the Alleluia all the choirs of angels join in this hymn, a universal and united adoration of God.¹³³

The Gospel is the manifestation of Christ through His first sign, the miracle of changing water into wine. Its association with Epiphany is obvious from the words of the Gospel itself: "Jesus . . . manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."¹³⁴ Mellriegel¹³⁵

¹³²Op. cit., p. 89.

¹³³Ibid., p. 90.

¹³⁴Strodach, The Church Year, p. 70; Lawrence, op. cit., p. 65.

¹³⁵Op. cit., p. 75.

discusses the meaning of the miracle for present day disciples:

At the very moment when disciples believe in Him, when in humility and longing they open their hearts to Him, He begins the work of sanctification, "He manifests His glory to them." He begins to change the water of their Adam-mortality into the precious wine of His own Christ-vitality.

The shadow of the Cross is cast by the words, "mine hour is not yet come."

We need the faith of the disciples in following from the miracle to wherever Christ's paths lead us.¹³⁶

The Propers for the Third Sunday After the Epiphany¹³⁷

Introit

Worship Him, all ye His angels: Zion heard and was glad.

The daughters of Judah rejoiced: because of Thy judgments, O Lord.

Psalm. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth the right hand of Thy majesty to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

Romans 12:16-21

Gradual

The heathen shall fear the name of the Lord: and all the kings of the earth Thy glory.

¹³⁶Strodach, The Church Year, p. 71.

¹³⁷The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 59.

- V. When the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear
in His glory. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- V. The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the
multitude of isles be glad thereof. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Matthew 8:1-13

From the Third Sunday after Epiphany on the liturgy forsakes the chronological sequence of events in the life of Jesus; it chooses miracles and teachings from the life of the Lord with little concern for time sequence.¹³⁸ However, the Sundays from now to the end of Epiphany continue the Epiphany themes. Their purpose is "to bring to a rich unfolding the mystery of Christ's Epiphany before our minds and within our souls."¹³⁹ Christ is manifested in His Kingdom as Savior on the Third Sunday, as Conqueror on the Fourth Sunday, as Judge on the Fifth Sunday. The Introits and the Graduals for these Sundays are those of the Third Sunday after the Epiphany. The Gospels are chosen from Matthew; and since they appear in a chapter sequence, they possibly indicate traces of a former lectio continua.¹⁴⁰

"The Lord's right hand" is the theme for the propers of the Third Sunday after Epiphany. The hand which reached out to Mary and Joseph and the Wise Men, which pointed to the jars of water at the wedding of Cana, now is extended to Jew and Gentile with healing power (Gospel). And the Church prays for the protection of this mighty right hand (Collect).¹⁴¹ The healing of both Jew and Gentile in the Gospel is a continuation of the missions

¹³⁸Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 91.

¹³⁹Hellriegel, op. cit., p. 76.

¹⁴⁰Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 91.

¹⁴¹Hellriegel, op. cit., p. 76.

emphasis of Epiphany.¹⁴² In this service we worship our Lord with the adoration and faith of the leper of the Gospel. His plea to be made clean is our plea. In the Eucharist God extends His right hand over us so that we may not die but live. But to approach our Lord we need the humility of the Centurion of the Gospel. And in our prayers we must include our brothers and sisters who are members together with us in Christ's Body (Epistle).¹⁴³

The Introit (Psalm 97:7b.8.1) continues the Epiphany themes of the Kingship of Christ, of His majesty, of our worship and adoration.

The text must still be viewed in the light of Epiphany. Christ still stands before us as the "Lord," as the "King." Angels surround and adore Him The Church rejoices at His revelation, at the love with which He calls also the heathens into His kingdom (today's Gospel), and at the gifts He dispenses.¹⁴⁴

In calling forth universal praise of God, the Introit is probably reflecting the universal mercy of the Lord as it is expressed in today's Gospel.¹⁴⁵

The Leper and the Centurion of today's Gospel could very well have prayed the Collect of today's service: "Stretch forth the right hand of Thy majesty to help and defend us."¹⁴⁶ On the basis of the miracles of healing portrayed in the Gospel the Church asks God in the Collect to look

¹⁴²Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 91.

¹⁴³Hellriegel, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

¹⁴⁴Reed, op. cit., p. 94.

¹⁴⁵Reed, op. cit., p. 447.

¹⁴⁶Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 92.

upon our infirmities and to stretch forth His right hand to help us.¹⁴⁷

The Collect is a reminder of the frailty and of the constant need of God's right hand to protect us.¹⁴⁸ Strodach¹⁴⁹ has this to say about the prayer's brevity:

This Little Prayer certainly is not very long
This in itself is an eloquent commentary on the faith of the pray-ers. They have taken God at His word. They are bringing just what they need to Him, - in the shortest way, in the simplest and clearest words. That is real prayer!

The Collect first appeared in Alcuin's supplement to the Gregorian Sacramentary.¹⁵⁰

The Epistle gives instruction about the love we must have for our neighbor and for our enemy.¹⁵¹ On the basis of the instruction given in the Epistle,

Christians must be convinced once and for all that they simply cannot hate anyone and still be good Christians. We can hate sin, we can dislike systems, but we cannot hate sinners or misguided upholders of systems.¹⁵²

Strodach¹⁵³ points out the relation of the Epistle to the Epiphany theme:

The positive directions of the Epistle teach how the Epiphany of Christ in the Christian is in showing mercy - for which he prays, which he receives - unto others. The cries which we hear, the needs which we see, the lives which we touch, are

¹⁴⁷Strodach, The Church Year, p. 76; Reed, op. cit., p. 447.

¹⁴⁸Messenger, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁴⁹The Collect for the Day, p. 59.

¹⁵⁰Shepherd, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁵¹Parach, Das Jahr Der Heiles, p. 92; Gueranger, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁵²Lawrence, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁵³The Church Year, p. 77.

to be heard, seen, and touched in the Spirit of Him who went about doing good - "Go thou, and do likewise."

The words "Do not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" can refer to Christ's merciful action in the Gospel.¹⁵⁴

The Gradual (Psalm 102:15-16; 97:1) is a vision of the end of time: The heathen have entered into the Kingdom of God; the city of God has been perfected, and now the returning Lord appears in might and majesty as He has already appeared at Epiphany in the liturgy.¹⁵⁵

In the Gradual, the holy Church again celebrates the coming of Sennael, and invites all nations and all the kings of the earth, to come and praise his holy name.¹⁵⁶

It is the picture of Epiphany all over again with a strong accent on the missions theme of Epiphany.¹⁵⁷

The Gospel is the Epiphany of Christ in relation to the despair of human woe, misery, and disease.¹⁵⁸ It is the picture of Christ as "Savior,"¹⁵⁹ and Savior of all men, including Jew and Gentile.¹⁶⁰ The combination of

¹⁵⁴ Strauss, op. cit., p. 150.

¹⁵⁵ Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 92.

¹⁵⁶ Gueranger, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁵⁷ Johnes, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁵⁸ Strodach, The Church Year, p. 75.

¹⁵⁹ Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 92.

¹⁶⁰ Strodach, The Church Year, p. 76.

miracles is significant. It shows the universality of His saving mission, and it shows the universality of the Gospel to the unfortunate and the outcast. Leprosy was a type of sin and so the healing of the Leper was viewed as the forgiveness of sins. The Centurion, representing the Gentile world, was the recipient of a blessing which was symbolic of the purpose of Christ's mission.¹⁶¹

The human race was infected with the leprosy of sin; the Son of God touched it by the mystery of the Incarnation, and restored it to health The vocation of the Gentiles, of which the Magi were the firstfruits, is again brought before us in the faith of the centurion.¹⁶²

The Propers for the Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany¹⁶³

(The Introit and the Gradual are the same as for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany)

Collect

Almighty God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright, grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

Romans 13:8-10

¹⁶¹Shepherd, op. cit., p. 115.

¹⁶²Queranger, op. cit., p. 254.

¹⁶³The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 60.

Gospel

Matthew 8:23-27

Through the picture of Christ stilling the tempest the propers for the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany manifest Christ to us as the Conqueror¹⁶⁴ of the powers of evil and as the Divine Helper of the strong, who in the midst of dangers are helpless without Him.¹⁶⁵

For comments on the Introit and Gradual see the section dealing with the propers for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The thought of the Collect is related to the message of the Gospel.¹⁶⁶ The storm at sea reappears in our life: dangers threaten us from all sides.¹⁶⁷ The Lessons for this Sunday point out two kinds of dangers. The Epistle points out the danger of breaking the commandments which relate to our duty to our neighbor. The Gospel points out the physical dangers of life.¹⁶⁸ Like the disciples we trust too much in ourselves and not enough in Christ, and so the Collect teaches us to ask for God's help.¹⁶⁹ It is the plea of the disciples: "Lord, save us."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 93.

¹⁶⁵Strodach, The Church Year, pp. 80-81.

¹⁶⁶Shepherd, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁶⁷Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 93.

¹⁶⁸Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 62.

¹⁶⁹Lawrence, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁷⁰Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 93.

But notice, the prayer is not that we may be kept from, but that we be supported in and carried through; but observe, also, that the prayer pleads for such strength and protection as will support and carry.¹⁷¹

The Collect is a 1549 Prayer Book translation of a Gelasian original, which was used by Luther in the German Litany of 1529.¹⁷² It refers back to the time of Gregory the Great, when the Lombards threatened the city of Rome.¹⁷³

The Epistle is the continuation of the course reading in the concluding section of Romans. It speaks of the moral and spiritual dangers which surround the Christian and of the power of love in the Kingdom of Christ.¹⁷⁴ Love is held out as the fulfilling of God's will.¹⁷⁵

The Gospel lends itself beautifully to a spiritual or an allegorical interpretation, and most commentators make the most of it. St. Augustine identified the boat as the Church, which throughout the centuries shows forth the divinity of Christ.¹⁷⁶ Guéranger¹⁷⁷ views the calming of the storm as a picture of Christ's victory over the forces of evil:

Let us adore the power of our Emanuel, who is come to calm the tempest which threatened the human race with death. In the midst of their danger, the successive generations of men had cried out: Lord! have us; we perish. When the fulness of time had come, he awoke from his rest; he had but to command, and the power of our enemies was destroyed.

171 Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 62.

172 Reed, op. cit., p. 448.

173 Schuster, op. cit., p. 414.

174 Reed, op. cit., p. 448.

175 Lawrence, op. cit., p. 76.

176 Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 85.

177 Op. cit., p. 261.

Lawrence¹⁷⁸ applies the scene of the stilling of the tempest to the history of the Church:

This Gospel contains the briefest history of the Church that we know of. Like her Master the Church has to go through the storm of a Good Friday death. Waves and tides of opposition assail her throughout her voyage across the seas of time. There are moments when her Captain Christ apparently sleeps, when the tempest seems about to swallow her up. But CHRIST IS STILL IN THE SHIP. "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Easter will come, eternal Easter, when Christ will rise, rebuke the storm and the waves, and there will come a great calm.

In any case, the Gospel is the manifestation of Christ as God through His power over the created elements.¹⁷⁹

The Propers for the Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany¹⁸⁰

(The Introit and the Gradual are the same as for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany.)

Collect

O Lord, we beseech Thee to keep Thy Church and household continually in Thy true religion that they who do lean upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by Thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

Colossians 3:12-17

¹⁷⁸Op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁷⁹Reed, op. cit., p. 448.

¹⁸⁰The Lutheran Kyrial, p. 60.

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-30

Christ is revealed as a wise Judge in the propers for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany. Again it is the Gospel, the parable of the Master who allows good and bad crops to grow together until the harvest brings about their separation, which gives the day its special meaning.¹⁸¹ It is once again a day of manifestation; but it is a new revelation of the majesty of Christ which is presented, and that in an ethical connection. The mixing of the good and bad and God's patient sparing of the Godless allow the Kingdom of His wisdom and power to shine in its brightest light.¹⁸²

Lawrence¹⁸³ finds in the two lessons two portraits of the Church. The Gospel is a portrait by Christ. It pictures the Church as it is, with weeds and wheat growing together.¹⁸⁴ The Epistle is a portrait by St. Paul. It pictures the ideal Christian community and their relations with each other. Lawrence claims that the Christians must make the real portrait become more and more like the ideal portrait by trying to be what they are supposed to be.

For a discussion of the Introit and Gradual see the section on the propers for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The picture behind the Collect is that of a household or family depend-

¹⁸¹Parach, Das Jahr Das Heilen, p. 94.

¹⁸²Alt. gn. cit., p. 483.

¹⁸³gn. cit., pp. 281-283.

¹⁸⁴It should be noted that Christ, in His interpretation of the parable, says that the field is the world, not the church.

ent upon its head for sustenance and protection.¹⁸⁵ God as the Father of the family which is the Church has the perpetual duty to guard, to protect, to defend it. The family does not rely on its own strength but on heavenly grace.¹⁸⁶ It is a quiet, confident plea for protection.¹⁸⁷ There is a connection between the Collect and the manifestation portrayed in the Gospel:

The Collect . . . founds its Petition wholly upon (the) Divine Lord's lordship and power. It pleads for that protection which His Gospel reveals as certain and present.¹⁸⁸

The Collect is a free translation of a collect of the Gregorian Sacramentary.¹⁸⁹ In the Latin the first petition is identical with that of the Collect for the Twenty-First Sunday After Trinity.¹⁹⁰

The Epistle for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany is like the other Epistles of the Epiphany season in describing the Christian life and in encouraging mutual edification by the Christian community, this time in Christian worship.¹⁹¹ There is manifestation here, too. It is the manifestation of Christ's power and glory in the government of His "church and household."¹⁹² The Epistle does not continue the course reading in Romans probably because the Epistle for the First Sunday in Advent begins

¹⁸⁵Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 115; Messenger, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁸⁶Parsch, *Das Jahr Das Heiles*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁸⁷Schuster, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

¹⁸⁸Strodach, *The Collect for the Day*, p. 65.

¹⁸⁹Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁰Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

¹⁹¹Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 116; Parsch, *Das Jahr Das Heiles*, p. 95.

¹⁹²Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

where the Epistle for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany leaves off.¹⁹³

The Gospel is the Epiphany of the Word. The Parable reveals Christ as the Lord of the Church who takes care of her government as well as her preservation. It sets forth His glory in her increase; even though evil comes, His purpose is still full of love, lest the wheat be harmed by the destruction of the tares.¹⁹⁴ Speaking to this point, Schuster¹⁹⁵ writes:

How profound are the mysteries of Providence! If the Lord does not punish and destroy the wicked in this life, it is in order that the good may not be involved in the same doom, who by ties of blood, of fellow-citizenship and of country are associated together with the sinners. The world never reflects upon the great and important part fulfilled by the saints, who . . . ward off from the world its well-deserved chastisements.

Parsch¹⁹⁶ finds in the Gospel picture of the sowing of the seed a parallel in the life of the believer:

Verlegen wir das Evangelium auch in unsere Seele! Der göttlich Sämann sät heute in der Sontagsmesse die Weizenfaat der Eucharistie in der Seele, sie soll in der Woche aufgehen; freilich auch der Teufel sät in Laufe der Woche sein Unkraut dazwischen. Doch wir wollen selbst das Unkraut durch unsere Busse verbrennen.

The Propers for the Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany.

The Transfiguration of Our Lord¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

¹⁹⁴Strodach, *The Church Year*, p. 83.

¹⁹⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 416.

¹⁹⁶*Das Jahr Das Heiles*, p. 96.

¹⁹⁷*The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 60.

Introit

The lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled
and shook.

Psalm, How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts;
my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts
of the Lord.

Collect

O God, who in the glorious transfiguration of Thine only-
begotten Son hast confirmed the mysteries of the faith
by the testimony of the fathers, and who, in the voice
that came from the bright cloud, didst in a wonderful
manner foreshew the adoption of sons, mercifully vouch-
safe to make us coheirs with the King of His glory and
bring us to the enjoyment of the same; through the
same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

Epistle

2 Peter 1:16-21

Gradual

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is
poured into Thy lips.

V. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right
hand: until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

V. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; show forth
His salvation from day to day: Declare His
glory among all people. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Matthew 17:1-9

In the Lutheran Use the propers for the Sixth Sunday after the
Epiphany are the propers for the Feast of the Transfiguration. Lutheran
Use prescribes the Feast of the Transfiguration to be celebrated on the
last Sunday after Epiphany in every year except when there is only one

Sunday after the Epiphany.¹⁹⁸ The Manifestation theme of the Transfiguration is the reason why Lutherans have prescribed it for this Sunday. The purpose of Epiphany is to show that the Christ who was born and who grew as a man is God, who has come to save all men. Each Sunday of the Epiphany season adds its own special thought to that purpose, not in the number of manifestations, but in the degree. The Feast of the Transfiguration is the climax of Epiphany. It also accords with the historic situation, since in the Church Year Christ now sets His face to go up to Jerusalem.¹⁹⁹

At the Antiphon (Psalm 77:18b) of the Introit the wondrous event of the Transfiguration flashes before the eyes of the Church.²⁰⁰ The Psalm verse (Psalm 84:1-2a) was chosen to serve as an allusion to St. Peter's suggestion in the Gospel to make three tabernacles.²⁰¹ The shaking and trembling of the antiphon should induce the Church to look beyond the mount of Transfiguration to the end of time when Christ will come in power and glory. Then not only Moses and Elijah and the three disciples, but the whole world will see His glory; and the bodies of believers will be transfigured like His.²⁰²

The Collect recites the historic event of the Transfiguration as the grounds for its petition. It looks back to the historic transfiguration and looks forward to the fulfillment of the purpose of Christ's coming and

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹Strodach, The Church Year, p. 87.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹Reed, op. cit., p. 449; Schuster, op. cit., IV, 419.

²⁰²Johner, op. cit., p. 418.

His final revelation to men.²⁰³ That purpose, as the Collect states it, is "the adoption of sons," "to make us coheirs with the King of His glory":

The Season began with God's Little Son in the Manger, then in His Temple. The Season closes with God's Glorious Son on the Mountainside, - and soon on the Cross! Epiphany, manifestation, mysterics of the faith, but all to make us, Paul says, "Heirs of Christ" . . . "sons of God" . . . The Collect foresees the adoption of sons . . . co-heirs with the King of His glory.²⁰⁴

The Collect is of unusual long length with a complicated structure of double antecedent clauses and a parallel construction throughout,²⁰⁵ indicating a late medieval origin.²⁰⁶

The Epistle is from the pen of Saint Peter, one of the three disciples whom our Lord took with Him up the mountain. His words are his eyewitness account of the Transfiguration scene.²⁰⁷

The Gradual is a hymn of praise to the Transfigured Christ, who is "fairer than the children of men." God has given Him power over all His enemies - the forces of evil. The Gradual invokes the whole world to "bless His name." The Gradual in the Lutheran rite differs from the one in the Roman Missal by the Lutheran use of a canonical verse (Psalm 110:1; 96:2-3) in place of an apocryphal verse.²⁰⁸

²⁰³Strodach, The Church Year, p. 88.

²⁰⁴Strodach, The Collect for the Day, p. 69.

²⁰⁵Reed, op. cit., p. 450.

²⁰⁶Strodach, The Church Year, p. 88.

²⁰⁷ibid., p. 87; Reed, op. cit., p. 450.

²⁰⁸ibid., p. 449.

The Gospel is the record of the Transfiguration as described in St. Matthew's Gospel. The effect of this unusual but happy spectacle caused St. Peter to exclaim: "Lord, it is good for us to be here . . . let us make here three tabernacles." John²⁰⁹ relates this experience of St. Peter to the experiences of illumination common to all Christians at times:

God does occasionally impart to us His illuminations and consolations. But they should serve to show the more clearly that our lasting home is not on this earth; they should enkindle in us a yearning and desire for an eternal transfiguration in heaven, the true home of our soul. To be sure, in order to attain this we must walk the same path that Christ has walked; suffer, and so enter into glory.

The Propers of Candlemas

The Propers in General

The Feast of Candlemas, or as it is known officially, The Presentation of Our Lord and the Purification of Mary,²¹⁰ is a fixed festival which occurs yearly on February 2, the fortieth day after Christmas.²¹¹ The date was chosen to coincide with the event of the Presentation and Purification in the life of our Lord, which took place on the fortieth day after His birth.²¹² The Candlemas feast belongs to the Christmas cycle whether or not it occurs within the Epiphany season²¹³ and is the closing feast of the

²⁰⁹Op. cit., pp. 417-418.

²¹⁰The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 85.

²¹¹Ibid., p. 3.

²¹²Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heilen, p. 98.

²¹³Villeneuve, op. cit., p. 58.

Christmas season.²¹⁴ It is the final act in the drama of the Christmas scene which begins at Advent and reaches its climax in Epiphany. The Sundays after the Epiphany picture Christ's Kingdom growing in the face of storms and opposition. The Feast of Candlemas echoes once more the message of Christmas as it proclaims the redemption of the world through the new-born Savior who is Light and Salvation.²¹⁵ Parsch²¹⁶ points out a development of thought in the three main feasts of the Christmas cycle, a development in relation to the symbol of light and to the extent of humanity's participation in the revelation of God:

Zu Weihnachten „leuchtet das Licht in die Finsternis hinein“ und nur wenige sind es, die es „anfnehmen“ (die Mutter, die Hirten stehen bei der Krippe); zu Epiphanie strahlt das „Licht“ über Jerusalem (die Kirche), „die Herrlichkeit des Herrn ist über Jerusalem aufgegangen“ und die Heidenwelt strömt aus der Finsternis zur Lichtstadt. Heute, an Mariä Lichtmess, ist das Licht in unsern Händen, wir tragen es in Procession und Messe, das Licht ist wesentlich mit der heutigen Liturgie verknüpft; heute geht aber auch die Kirche dem Herrn brüderlich entgegen und „nimmt voll Sehnsucht die (menschgewordene) Barnaherrigkeit in ihre Arme.“

The message of Candlemas is not only an echo of Christmas; it is also a transition to the Easter cycle.²¹⁷ The Virgin Mary presents her Son to the Lord, and Simeon proclaims redemption to be accomplished through Him.²¹⁸

²¹⁴Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 98.

²¹⁵Strasser, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

²¹⁶Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 98.

²¹⁷Maering, op. cit., p. 20.

²¹⁸Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heiles, p. 98.

The propers of the Feast of Candlemas have a threefold significance for the Christian Church. They deal with the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, with the act of Purification of His virgin mother, and with the meeting between Simeon and our Lord that produced the *Nunc Dimittis*.²¹⁹

Both the Presentation and Purification aspects are based on the Mosaic Law. The Law required that every first-born male had to be offered to the Lord and that every mother of a male child had to offer a sacrifice in the Temple at the end of the forty day purification period following the birth of her son.²²⁰ The dogmatic subject of the feast is the Incarnation of Christ in relation to the fact that He is the first-born among many brethren.

Kliefoth²²¹ quotes Martin Chemnitz on this point:

In festo Purificationis exponitur doctrina, quomodo Christus sit primogenitus inter multos fratres, traduntur commonefactiones utiles pro puerperis, et dulcissimum Simeonis canticum explicatur.

The manifestation theme of Epiphany occurs over and over again in the propers.²²² The light theme of Epiphany is especially prominent. The customs of blessing candles, of processing with candles, and of using candles during the Eucharist on this feast will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV. It is because of the use of candles in connection with this feast that it came to be known as Candlemas.²²³

²¹⁹Haering, *op. cit.*, p. 20; *Candlemas* (Loveland, Ohio: Grailville, c.1950), p. 8; Richard Klopf, "A Light to Lighten the Gentiles," *Una Sancta*, VI, (Christmaside, 1945), 10-12.

²²⁰Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Villeneuve, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²²¹Fr. Kliefoth, *Die evangelische Gottesdienst - Ordnung in den deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Destruction und Reformation* (Second edition; Schwerin: Stiller'schen Hof-Buchhandlung, 1861), IV, 329-330.

²²²Klopf, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

²²³Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

The Song of Simeon gives expression to the missions and worship theme of Epiphany in addition to the light theme. On the basis of the relation between the Epistle and the Gospel it is possible to view Candlemas as:

. . . ein Fest des Zusammenschlusses alten und neuen Testaments durch Erinnerung an die Erfüllung der Worte des letzten Propheten im alten Bunde, der da spricht: "Bald wird kommen zu Seinen Tempel der Herr, und der Engel des Bundes, dass ihr begehret."²²⁴

The compound name of the feast, The Presentation of Our Lord and the Purification of Mary, has made it possible to view the feast as a feast of our Lord or as a feast of the Virgin Mary. It is primarily a feast of our Lord.²²⁵

The Propers²²⁶ in Detail

Introit

We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God!
in the midst of Thy Temple.

According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise
unto the ends of the earth! Thy right hand
is full of righteousness.

Psalms. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!
in the city of our God, in the mountain of His
holiness.

Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, we humbly beseech Thy Majesty that, as Thine only-begotten Son was this day presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto Thee with pure and clean hearts; by the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, etc.

²²⁴Loche, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

²²⁵Parsch, *Das Jahr Das Heilen*, p. 98; Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 99; Haering, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²²⁶*The Lutheran Hymnal*, pp. 85-86.

Epistle

Malachi 3:1-4

Gradual

We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God,
in the midst of Thy Temple; according to Thy
name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of
the earth.

- V. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of
of our Lord, in the mountain of His holiness.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
- V. I will worship toward Thy holy Temple and will
praise Thy name. Hallelujah!

Gospel

Luke 2:22-32

In the Introit (Psalm 48:9,10,1) the Church sings the glory of
Jerusalem's Temple and of the Lord who visited it on this day. "Great is
the Lord . . . in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness."
Simeon, the representative of the whole human race, receives into his arms
the Loving-Kindness sent by God.²²⁷ The priests of the Temple might have
used words like these to greet the Christ Child, but only Anna and Simeon
rejoice. But

. . . the Church offers that which Sion denied its King.
She values the fact that He came with a heart full of
tender mercy and that she is privileged now to receive
Him for whom the centuries had prayed:

²²⁷Guaranger, op. cit., p. 482.

"Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy." Today her prayer is heard, and with a grateful heart she cries: Susanna - "we have received."²²⁸

Commenting on the Antiphon, Schuster²²⁹ points out:

The mercy that humanity has received in the midst of the temple . . . is in truth Jesus, made known in the temple to Simeon and through him to Israel and to all believers.

In The Lutheran Hymnal the Introit is the same as the Introit used on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity.²³⁰

The Collect bases its plea upon the historic event of the Presentation. It draws a parallel between the Presentation of Christ and our Presentation to the Lord:

In the Collect, the Church prays, that her children may be presented, as Jesus was, to the Eternal Father; but, in order that they may meet with a favourable reception, she asks him to give them purity of heart.²³¹

The Epistle is a rare instance of the selection of an Old Testament lesson for one of the lessons. It is from the prophet Malachi and foretells that Christ is to appear in His Temple. It is the fulfillment of the Advent longing for the manifestation of the Lord. But it also refers to Christ's manifestation at the end of time, since the lesson speaks of Christ not as a

²²⁸Johner, op. cit., p. 366.

²²⁹op. cit., III, 404.

²³⁰The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 85.

²³¹Guerranger, op. cit., p. 482.

melting fire."²³²

On this feast the prophecy of Malachi is realized; we have received God's mercy; we behold the Angel of the Covenant in His Temple. In the Gradual (Psalm 48:9.10.1) we render Him homage and offer Him our worship and adoration.²³³ We celebrate the Loving Kindness who has appeared in our Temple and reveals Himself to us in the service.²³⁴ The Lutheran Hymnal²³⁵ provides the following rubric:

If this day comes after Septuagesima, the Hallelujah and Verse of the Gradual are omitted, and the Nunc Dimittis is used as Tract.

The Gospel records the first time the Epistle prophecy was fulfilled.²³⁶ The Holy Family brings the Lord of the Temple into the Temple's sacred portals. There He is greeted by Simeon, representing the prophets who foretold His coming. Simeon is also the representative of sinful mankind, whom Christ has come to redeem, and he greets the Christ Child as the "Light to lighten the Gentiles." It is the Song of Simeon which the Lutheran Church sings after receiving Christ in the Lord's Supper, and which the whole Church sings at Compline.²³⁷ As Christ was presented in the Temple, so at the end of the Epiphany season we also should present ourselves to Him to remain with Him forever.²³⁸

²³²Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, p. 101.

²³³Johner, op. cit., p. 367.

²³⁴Guéranger, op. cit., p. 484.

²³⁵p. 86.

²³⁶Parsch, Das Jahr Des Heiles, pp. 101-102.

²³⁷Klopf, op. cit., p. 10.

²³⁸Guéranger, op. cit., p. 486.

CHAPTER IV

THE CUSTOMS OF THE EPIPHANY SEASON

The history of the Epiphany Season provides a background for an understanding of the present meaning of the Epiphany Season. The propers of the Epiphany Season are the source for its meaning in the present life of the Church. Produced by the history and deriving meaning from the propers, there are customs which have associated themselves with the Epiphany Season of the Church Year. These customs both reflect and help to mold the present meaning of the Epiphany season. Chapter IV deals with the customs of the Epiphany Season with the purpose of seeing how these customs reflect and contribute to the meaning of Epiphany. Nearly all the customs are connected with the feasts of Epiphany and Candlemas. This chapter deals first with the customs of the Feast of Epiphany and then with the customs of the Feast of Candlemas.

The Customs of the Feast of Epiphany

Customs in the Church

White is the color indicated for vestments and paraments on the Feast of Epiphany in the liturgical churches.¹ In the Lutheran Church white is

¹Lutheran Church Calendar (Eire, Pennsylvania: Ashby Co., c.1952), January notes; Heinrich Alt, Der Christliche Cultus (Second enlarged edition; Berlin: G. W. F. Müller, 1860), II, 325; Gaspar Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal (Saint Paul, Minnesota: N. M. Lohmann Co., c.1949), p. 65.

the color throughout the Epiphany season.² In the Roman Church white is used from Epiphany to its Octave, and then green is substituted for use until Septuagesima Sunday.³ White is the color of perfection, of perfect glory, of beauty, holiness, joy. It is appointed for the great joy days in the Christian calendar, the festivals of the Godhead.⁴ And so, the color used on the Feast and throughout the season reflects the idea of manifestation brought out by the propers. In its own way it also helps to emphasize the theme of manifestation for the believer acquainted with the meaning of the color.

A common Epiphany custom is to substitute the figures of wise men for shepherds in the manger scene put up in the church at Christmas.⁵ Another change in the Christmas manger scene is the transformation of the crib, the sign of Christ's humble birth, into a royal throne. The change is effected by lining the crib with cloth of gold or velvet and by placing a crown on the Christ Child's head and a scepter in His hand. The crib transformed into a royal throne is a reflection of the Introit: "Behold, the Lord, the Ruler hath come; and the kingdom and the power and the glory are in His hand." In addition it contrasts the Lord's peaceful coming at Christmas

²Lutheran Church Calendar, January notes.

³Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴Paul Zeller Strodach, *A Manual on Worship* (Revised edition; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 85.

⁵Alt, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

with His triumphant world manifestation at Epiphany.⁶ Another custom in connection with the Epiphany manger scene is a procession by the children of the parish to the Christ Child, carrying the figures of the wise men and their own gifts in imitation of the adoration of the Magi.⁷ A devotion is suggested for use in connection with placing the Magi at the manger scene.⁸ During the procession with the figures of the Magi to the manger the children pray the Litany for the Conversion of All Men (See Table No. 1), or an Epiphany hymn. Three children bear gifts: gold or money for foreign missions, incense for worship, myrrh for works of mercy or money for medical missions. At the manger an appropriate Epiphany collect is prayed. The following versicles and responses precede the collect:

V. All they from Sheba shall come. Hallelujah!
R. They shall bring gold and incense.

V. The Lord be with you.
R. And with thy spirit.

Then the procession continues until all have returned to their seats. It is evident how the customs in connection with the figures of the Magi reflect and underline the Epiphany ideas of worship, missions, and manifestation.

The wise men serve as models for several other Epiphany church customs. In the Roman Missal⁹ there is a direction "here genuflect" before the words of the Gospel: "and falling down they adored him." It is an attempt to make

⁶Epiphany (Loveland, Ohio: The Grail, 1945).

⁷Therese Mueller, Our Children's Year of Grace (Second edition; Saint Louis, Missouri: Pio Decimo Press, c.1943), pp. 17-18.

⁸"Living the Christian Year," Una Sancta, VIII (St. Matthew, 1948), 18-21.

⁹Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 67.

TABLE I

Litany for the Conversion of All Men¹⁰

The Kyrie

- V. O God, the Father, Who hath made of one blood all nations for
to dwell on all the face of the earth:
- R. Have mercy upon us.
- V. O God, the Son, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory
of Thy people Israel:
- R. Have mercy upon us.
- V. O God, the Holy Ghost, Teacher of all things, Who dost govern and
sanctify the whole Christian Church:
- R. Have mercy upon us.
- V. Our spiritual deadness:
- R. O Lord, forgive.
- V. Our forgetfulness of others, especially of those who have never
had the Gospel preached unto them:
- R. O Lord, forgive.
- V. Our wasted opportunities, our readiness to pass others by, our national
and racial prejudices, and our own unchristian example at home or
abroad:
- R. O Lord, forgive.
- V. God of love, save Thy people:
- R. And bless Thine inheritance.
- V. God of love, waken the heathen:
- R. And redeem their souls for Thy mercy's sake.
- V. God of love, establish Thy kingdom in every land.
- R. And fill the earth with Thy glory.
- V. We pray for Thy ancient people Israel:
- R. Prove to them from the Scriptures that the Messiah has come.
- V. We pray for Europe and Asia, for Africa and for the Isles of the sea:
- R. Hear Thou the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver them.
- V. We pray that Thy Church may everywhere be found:
- R. In snow or sand, hill or valley, jungle or field.

¹⁰Una Sancta, VIII (Conversion of St. Paul, 1948), 19-20.

- V. We pray for all mission workers, for evangelists and catechists, for pastors and teachers, for doctors and nurses;
- R. Multiply the work of their hands.

- V. We pray for all converts, for all who hear Thy Word for the first, and for all who find it hard to believe;
- R. Give them the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit.

- V. We pray for those in our own midst who confess not the Name of Jesus; for all who have hardened their hearts; for all who have become careless; for all who have turned back; for all who are Christian only in name.
- R. Recover them, O Lord, and establish them in the truth of the Gospel.

- V. We pray for ourselves, that we may be charitable, and that by our very example those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death may be guided into the way of peace;
- R. Turn us and quicken us, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee.

- V. O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us;
- R. Save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

The Kyrie.

The Lord's Prayer.

[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

the worshippers not only hearers but imitators of the wise men's action.¹¹ Some churches also observe the custom of an Epiphany offertory procession in which gold, incense, and medicine are offered to the Lord together with the offering of the people; gold for work among the poor, incense for the needs of the parish during the year, and medicine to help the ill who are poor.¹² This is a survival of a medieval custom in which kings imitated the adoration of the three kings by presenting gold, incense, and myrrh at the Offertory of the Mass.¹³ Many pious believers in the medieval church also followed that practice. At the English court the custom is still retained that the Sovereign offers an ingot of gold as a tribute of homage to the King of kings.¹⁴

"A traditional element of the service on the Feast of the Epiphany is the announcement of the Church Year after the reading of the Holy Gospel."¹⁵ It is a custom which originated in the East with the purpose of announcing the date of Easter for the year, but in the Middle Ages the West added other moveable dates to the announcement of Easter.¹⁶

¹¹Pius Parsch, Das Jahr Das Heiles (Thirteenth edition; Klosterneuberg, Wien: Bernini - Verlag, 1947), p. 81.

¹²"Living the Christian Year," op. cit., p. 20; Parsch, op. cit., p. 82; Maeller, op. cit., p. 18.

¹³Rodrigue Cardinal Villeneuve, An Introduction to the Liturgical Year, translated by J. A. Otto Eisensimer (New York and Cincinnati: Frederick Pustet Co., 1946), p. 49.

¹⁴Abbot Guéranger, The Liturgical Year, translated from the French by Laurence Shepherd (Fourth edition; Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1951), III, 113-114.

¹⁵Lutheran Church Calendar, January notes.

¹⁶K. A. Heinrich Kellner, Heortology: A History Of The Christian Festivals From Their Origin To The Present Day, translated from the second German edition by a Priest of the Diocese of Westminster (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1908), p. 171.

The form adapted for the year 1953 is printed in Table No. 2. This custom shows the connection which unites the great solemnities of the Church Year with one another and brings out the great importance of the Resurrection feast in the Church Year.¹⁷

Customs in the Home

Whatever customs the preceding section mentioned in connection with the manger scene in the church can also be applied to the manger scene in the home.

On the Vigil of Epiphany some churches of the Western tradition observe the custom of blessing water, incense, and chalk for devotional use in the home on Epiphany.¹⁸ In some cases the clergy use the blessed water in visiting all the members of the parish on the Feast of Epiphany to bring them the greeting of peace and to sprinkle their homes.¹⁹ In the case of large parishes where it would not be possible for the clergy to visit every home, the suggestion is made that the pastor of the parish give the blessing in four directions from the church door. The time of the blessing is then made known to the people of the parish to enable them to gather around their home altars to read the psalms and prayers of the rite of blessing. The father of the family assumes the function of going through

¹⁷Gueranger, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁸Parsch, *op. cit.*, p. 78; Otto Haering, *Living With The Church*, translated by Rombert Bularsik (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1930), p. 17; *Epiphany*.

¹⁹*Ibid.*; Alt, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

TABLE 2

The Announcement of the Church Year²⁰

Dearly beloved brethren, ye shall know that as we have rejoiced in the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so there is announced to you by the mercy of God the joyous observance of the Resurrection of the Same our Saviour:

February 1 is Septuagesima Sunday.

On February 18 Ash Wednesday begins the most holy season of Lent.

On April 5 we shall celebrate with great rejoicing the Holy Easter Festival of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May 14 is the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

May 24 is the Feast of Pentecost.

November 29 is the First Sunday in the Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

²⁰Arthur C. Piepkorn, "Announcing the Christian Year," Una Sancta, VII (Advent, 1946), 12, adapted for 1953.

following:

Bless, O Lord, almighty God, this place, that there may be in it health, purity, victorious strength, humility, love, patience, obedience to God's laws, and thankfulness to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; may this blessing remain in this house and upon all those dwelling herein. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.²³

The blessing of water on the Feast of Epiphany stems from the ancient celebration of the Baptism of our Lord on this feast and from the ancient administration of Baptism on the Vigil of the feast.²⁴ An ancient tradition teaches that Christ hallowed all the waters of the earth through His Baptism. The ancient baptismal customs and beliefs developed the rite of blessing water on the Vigil of Epiphany for use in blessing the homes of the parish.²⁵ In the Eastern Orthodox Church today there is still the blessing of baptismal waters on the Feast of Epiphany.²⁶ The custom of blessing water in connection with the Feast of Epiphany can serve to call the Baptism of Christ to mind and so emphasize one of the important manifestations traditionally associated with the feast. The custom of blessing homes by sprinkling water can help to bring out the underlying redemptive purpose of Christ's manifestation.

The custom in the Western tradition of blessing incense for use in the home is similar in purpose to the blessing of water and stems from the

²³Bernard Strasser, With Christ Through The Year (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1947), p. 93.

²⁴Ibid.; Alt. op. cit., pp. 40.43; Guerranger, op. cit., p. 225.

²⁵Epiphany.

²⁶Guerranger, op. cit., p. 225.

Gospel account of the Magi's gift of incense.

Another Epiphany custom of Medieval origin is the blessing of chalk and its distribution to the faithful of the parish so that they may write the initials of the three kings with the numbers of the year on the lintel of the doors of the house,²⁷ for example, 19 K + M + B + 53.²⁸ The purpose of this custom is explained in the following way: it is to remind

all who enter and leave through that door, that we too should be ready as they (the wise men) were to leave everything, and to follow the star of the Nativity. We also must profess the divinity of Christ, his kingship before an unfaithful Jerusalem, an inhospitable Bethlehem.²⁹

In other words, the custom is another way of emphasizing the meaning of the Epiphany feast and of enabling the people of the Church to express that meaning in their lives.

In the Middle Ages the life of the wise men was depicted in pageantry and drama.³⁰ Florence Berger³¹ suggests that the modern family could celebrate the Epiphany feast by putting on a homemade drama dealing with the Visit of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt for the benefit of neighbors and relatives.

Just as the Advent wreath and candles serve as the center of devotion in Advent and a Christmas birthday candle serves that purpose at Christmas,

²⁷Hueller, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²⁸K is Kaspar, M is Melchior, B is Balthazar, the traditional names of the three wise men.

²⁹Hueller, *op. cit.*, p. 18; For another explanation see Haering, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁰Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

³¹Florence Berger, "In The Home," *Orate Fratres*, XXV (January, 1951), 132-134.

it is suggested that an Epiphany star, with a light burning inside, serve as the center of devotion on Epiphany.³²

The King's Feast is another custom that occurs on Epiphany. It is a celebration involving a special cake, known as "Twelfth Cake," or "Three King's Cake," or "Epiphany Cake," in which there has been placed a bean or some other small object. The person who receives the piece of cake with the bean is proclaimed King for the day.³³ The custom has been explained as a symbol of harmony and humility, since all eat from the one cake and each member of the family pledges his willingness to acknowledge someone else as ruler.³⁴

In some places in Italy and South Germany there is the custom of giving gifts to children on Epiphany instead of Christmas in remembrance of the gifts of the Magi.³⁵

The sending of Epiphany greeting cards is suggested as a means of making people aware of the importance of Epiphany in the mind of the Church.³⁶

Epiphany Hymns

A custom common to both church and home is the use of special hymns related to the Epiphany season. Epiphany hymns in common use in the church

³²Florence Berger, "In The Home," Orate Fratres, XIV (February, 1951), 132-134.

³³Gueranger, op. cit., pp. 114-115; P. Stewart Craig, A Candle Is Lighted (Lewin's Head, Bristol, Great Britain: Barleigh Press, 1945), p. 26; Florence Berger, Cooking For Christ (Des Moines, Iowa: National Catholic Rural Life Conference, c.1949), pp. 32-33, which also includes a recipe for "Epiphany Cake."

³⁴Ibid., op. cit., p. 323.

³⁵Ibid., p. 322.

³⁶Epiphany.

today reflect the meaning which the season has for the church in the present and at the same time proclaim in song the meaning of Epiphany for the believer.

The manifestation theme of Epiphany recurs over and over in Epiphany hymns. The manifestation to the Magi is especially prominent. Stanzas one to three of "As With Gladness Men of Old"³⁷ pray that we may share the experience of the wise men. The first stanza prays: As the wise men were led by a star, so may we be led by Christ. The second stanza asks: As the wise men joyfully sought to worship Christ, so may we seek Christ's mercy-seat. In the third stanza we pray that as they offered "gifts most rare," so may we offer our costliest treasures. "Brightest and Best"³⁸ is another hymn which deals with the account of the wise men. It appeals in the first stanza to the Star of the East for guidance to the infant Redeemer. In stanza two it yields to the popular error that the wise men found the Christ Child in the stable in which He was born. Stanza three refers to the gifts of the wise men: "odors of Eden," "myrrh" "gold." Other hymns that refer to the manifestation to the Magi, either by direct reference to the story or by references to the star and to the gifts they brought, are "Earth Has Many a Noble City,"³⁹ "From the Eastern Mountains,"⁴⁰ "Hail, Thou Source of

³⁷The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, c.1941), Hymn # 127.

³⁸Ibid., Hymn # 128.

³⁹The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America 1940 (Norwood, Mass: The Pilgrimage Press, c.1943), Hymn # 48.

⁴⁰Ibid., Hymn # 49.

Every Blessing,"⁴¹ "O Jesus, King of Glory,"⁴² "O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness,"⁴³ and "What Star is This,"⁴⁴

The Office Hymn for Vespers of Epiphany,⁴⁵ Hostis Herodes impie,⁴⁶ emphasizes the traditional threefold manifestation of the Epiphany Feast. The first and second stanzas of this hymn deal with the manifestation to the Magi. The third stanza deals with the manifestation in the Baptism of Jesus. The fourth stanza deals with the manifestation of Christ by the miracle performed at the wedding of Cana. Another hymn, "Within the Father's House,"⁴⁷ is based on the manifestation of Christ as God's Son through His visit to the Temple. One hymn was written specifically for the Transfiguration of Jesus. "Tis Good, Lord, To be Here"⁴⁸ describes that event.

Some hymns deal with the theme of manifestation in a general way. One of these, "The Lord is Come, On Syrian Soil,"⁴⁹ contains the following lines:

⁴¹The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 129.

⁴²Ibid., Hymn # 130.

⁴³Songs of Praise, edited by Percy Dearmer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Martin Shaw (Enlarged edition; London: Oxford University Press, 1950), Hymn # 93.

⁴⁴Hymnal for Scotland Incorporating the English Hymnal, authorized for use in the Episcopal Church of Scotland (London and Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1950), Hymn # 44.

⁴⁵Lutheran Church Calendar, January notes.

⁴⁶The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 131.

⁴⁷Ibid., Hymn # 133.

⁴⁸Ibid., Hymn # 135.

⁴⁹Songs of Praise, Hymn # 95.

The Lord is come! In Him we trace
 The fulness of God's truth and grace;
 Throughout those words and acts divine
 Gleams of the eternal splendor shine;
 And from his inmost spirit flow,
 As from a height of sunlit snow,
 The rivers of perennial life,
 To heal and sweeten nature's strife.

"How Lovely Shines the Morning Star"⁵⁰ emphasizes Christ's manifestation by extolling Him with names of God, such as, King of Grace, King of Ages.

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed"⁵¹ reflects the manifestation of Christ in His miracles of healing. "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"⁵² was written specifically to summarize the manifestations of the season. The theme of manifestation is very pronounced, since each stanza ends: "God in man made manifest."

The Epiphany theme of missions receives strong emphasis in the hymns of Epiphany. "The People that in Darkness Sat"⁵³ describes the gathering of the nations and their coming to hail the Sun of Righteousness. "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"⁵⁴ brings out the missions theme when it says that "Arabia's desert ranger," "the Ethiopian stranger," ships from the isles, kings, all nations shall adore Him. The hymn, "From the Eastern Mountains,"⁵⁵ voices this mission prayer:

⁵⁰The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 343.

⁵¹Ibid., Hymn # 59.

⁵²Ibid., Hymn # 134.

⁵³Ibid., Hymn # 106.

⁵⁴Ibid., Hymn # 59.

⁵⁵The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America 1940, Hymn # 49.

Gather in the heathen
 Who in lands afar
 Ne'er have seen the brightness
 Of Thy guiding star.

"Hail, Thou Source of Every Blessing"⁵⁶ thanks the Father of all mankind for leading the Gentiles into His courts. It is mindful of the fact that we, too, are Gentiles, who were once far off, but are now united in the covenant of redemption ushered in by Christ.

The Epiphany theme of manifestation has as its counterpart the theme of revelation of Christ's kingdom and power and glory. Generally speaking, the hymns of the Epiphany season all extol Christ as God, as Lord, as King. They ascribe to Him such titles as "Morning Star," "King of Grace,"⁵⁷ Prophet, Priest and King,⁵⁸ "Maker and Monarch and Savior of all,"⁵⁹ the Lord's Anointed, David's Son,⁶⁰ and many others. The hymn, "O Jesus, King of Glory,"⁶¹ speaks of His realm enduring forever with His throne in heaven. The rule and dominion of Christ is also stressed in "The People that in Darkness Sat."⁶²

⁵⁶The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 129.

⁵⁷"How Lovely Shines the Morning Star," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 343.

⁵⁸"Songs of Thankfulness and Praise," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 134.

⁵⁹"Brightest and Best," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 128.

⁶⁰"Hail to the Lord's Anointed," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 59.

⁶¹The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 130.

⁶²Ibid., Hymn # 106.

The Epiphany hymns are above everything else hymns of worship and praise, and so reflect that emphasis of Epiphany. The worship of the Magi offers a basis for the theme of worship. For example, in "As with Gladness Men of Old,"⁶³ our worship is related to the worship of the Magi:

As with joyful steps they sped,
Savior, to Thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee whom heav'n and earth adore, . . .
As they offered gifts most rare . . . So may we
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King!

"O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness"⁶⁴ is referring to the Magi worship when it directs us:

Bow down before him,
With gold of obedience, and incense of holiness,
Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name.

"Brightest and Best"⁶⁵ speaks of the adoration of the angels and suggests that the heart's adoration and the prayers of the poor are better than the vain offering of gifts. The entire hymn, "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star,"⁶⁶ is addressed to Christ in intimate tones of worship and praise.

"Hail, Thou Source of Every Blessing"⁶⁷ prays: "May we . . . live devoted

⁶³The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 127.

⁶⁴Songs of Praise, Hymn # 93.

⁶⁵The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 128.

⁶⁶Ibid., Hymn # 343.

⁶⁷Ibid., Hymn # 129.

to thy praise, . . . Grateful anthems ever raise!" "What Star is This"⁶⁸ and "Earth Has Many a Noble City"⁶⁹ end with doxologies.

The light theme of Epiphany is an important feature in many of the Epiphany hymns, too. The hymns refer to the star of Epiphany. It is called the Star of Mercy,⁷⁰ Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning.⁷¹ It is identified with Christ as the Morning Star,⁷² as Jacob's Star,⁷³ as Light of Light.⁷⁴ The hymn "What Star is This,"⁷⁵ makes light its main emphasis: while wise men gaze in amazement at the star, they have a clearer light shining within which leads them to seek the Giver of the sign. The hymn also prays that while the star of grace impells us to seek God's face, "Let not our slothful hearts refuse The guidance of Thy light to use." The theme of light is connected with the theme of missions in "From the Eastern Mountains":⁷⁶

⁶⁸Hymnal for Scotland Incorporating the English Hymnal, Hymn # 44.

⁶⁹The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America 1940, Hymn # 48.

⁷⁰"Hail, Thou Source of Every Blessing," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 129.

⁷¹"Brightest and Best," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 128.

⁷²"How Lovely Shines the Morning Star," The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 343.

⁷³"What Star is This," Hymnal for Scotland Incorporating the English Hymnal, Hymn # 44.

⁷⁴"From the Eastern Mountains," The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America 1940, Hymn # 49.

⁷⁵Hymnal for Scotland Incorporating the English Hymnal, Hymn # 44.

⁷⁶The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America 1940, Hymn # 49.

Light of Light that shineth
Ere the worlds began,
Draw Thou near, and lighten
Ev'ry heart of man.

"As With Gladness Men of Old"⁷⁷ tells us that in the world beyond no created light is necessary, since Christ is its Light, Joy and Crown, its "Sun which goes not down." The light theme reaches its climax on the Feast of Transfiguration, and the Transfiguration hymn, "'Tis Good, Lord, to be Here,"⁷⁸ says:

Thy Glory fills the night,
Thy face and garments, like the sun,
Shine with unborrowed light.

The Epiphany hymns reflect the eschatological emphasis of the Epiphany season and speak of the final manifestation of Christ at the end of time.

Stanzas four to six of "As With Gladness Men of Old"⁷⁹ are a prayer to Jesus to lead us through life to a vision of Him in glory. "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"⁸⁰ describes the event of the final Epiphany:

Sun and moon shall darkened be,
Stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
All will see His glorious sign;
All will then the trumpet hear;
All will see the Judge appear;
Thou by all wilt be confessed,
God in man made manifest.

The hymn adds this prayer:

May we imitate Thee now
And be pure as pure art Thou.
That we like to Thee may be
At Thy great Epiphany

⁷⁷The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn # 127.

⁷⁸Ibid., Hymn # 135.

⁷⁹Ibid., Hymn # 127.

⁸⁰Ibid., Hymn # 134.

And may praise Thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.

In "Within the Father's House"⁸¹ we ask for the ability to recognize each revelation as it is given

Till . . . on the cleansed soul shall burst the ever-
lasting day,

Till we behold Thy face
and know as we are known
Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Coequal Three in One,

"How Lovely Shines the Morning Star"⁸² ends with the phrase: "Lord, I look for Thy returning." "Alleluia, Song of Gladness,"⁸³ a hymn which bids farewell to the Alleluia at the end of the Epiphany season,⁸⁴ prays that we may be able to keep an eternal Easter to sing Alleluias eternally.

The Customs of the Feast of Candlemas

Taking its cue from the Song of Simeon's "light to lighten the Gentiles," the Church has developed one of the most unusual customs of the whole liturgical year for the Feast of Candlemas. It is the custom of blessing and processing with candles before the Eucharist of the day.⁸⁵ In some cases the

⁸¹ibid., Hymn # 133.

⁸²ibid., Hymn # 343.

⁸³The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, 1940, Hymn # 57.

⁸⁴The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 41, provides the rubric: "During the Penitential Seasons the Hallelujah shall be omitted." A penitential season begins with Septuagesima Sunday, as is evident from the Graduals of the Sundays from Septuagesima to Easter.

⁸⁵Richard Klopff, "A Light to Lighten the Gentiles," Una Sancta, VI (Christmastide, 1945), 11-12; In this thesis the word "blessing" is used in the sense of "set apart for special use."

Church not only consecrates the candles for use in the services, but it consecrates the candles for its yearly liturgical use.⁸⁶ For the rite of the blessing of candles see Table No. 3. Consecrated candles are given to the people so that they may use them for their services at home, for sick communions, and for use in the last moments of their earthly life. The candle is to remind them of their baptismal candle, the sign of their status as a child of God, and to prepare them to meet the bridegroom with the burning candle of faith when He comes.⁸⁷ The candles are also used in connection with the Candlemas processions.

The candles symbolising the light of Christ, are put into the hands of the faithful and carried in procession to represent their carrying Christ in their hearts as they go through life.⁸⁸

But the candle has a symbolism all its own. As its flame melts and consumes the candle, so Christ's sacrifice of love consumed Him on the altar of the Cross and gave us a new life. It is for us to keep the flame of this new life glowing in our hearts so that we may be light bearers - Christ bearers - to others.⁸⁹

As the candles are ignited and burn, so should our souls, kindled with the light of Jesus Christ, beam in lovely radiance before the Lord. The prayer at the blessing beautifully expresses this thought Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness and penetrates to the inmost heart; and we, enkindled by Him, should be as the

⁸⁶ Parsch, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁸⁷ Parsch, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁸⁸ Strasser, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

TABLE 3

The Blessing of the Candles⁹⁰

The candles to be blessed are placed on a table on the Epistle side of the altar. The Pastor prays the following collects while the congregation stands:

- V. The Lord be with you.
R. And with thy spirit.

(In saying the blessing, he turns towards the candles to sign the Cross over them.) Let us pray:

Almighty and eternal God, who didst will that Thine only-begotten Son should this day be presented in Thy Holy Temple and held in Holy Simeon's arms; vouchsafe to bless †, hallow †, and illumine with Thy heavenly benediction these candles which we desire to light and bear in honor of Thy Holy Name. Grant us then, O Lord, our God, worthily to offer the same to Thee, that we ourselves may be kindled with the holy light of Thy most gracious countenance, and made worthy to be presented unto Thee in the holy temple of Thine eternal glory, through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.

R. Amen.

Let us pray:

O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Light unfailing, the Maker of all created light; bless † these lights to be borne by Thy faithful people in honor of Thy name, and grant that ourselves, being sanctified and blessed by Thee, may be illumined with the brightness of Thy countenance. And as with that same glory Thou madest the face of Thy servant Moses to shine, grant that, our hearts and all our senses being filled with light, we be found worthy of the vision of Thine eternal splendor, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Let us pray:

Almighty and eternal God, who hast dispelled our darkness, and kindled the light of faith and truth, by the one unfailing Light, Thine Only-begotten Son, incarnate of the Virgin Mary; mercifully grant that as by outward light our eyes are lightened, so may our souls be gladdened by that which shineth within; through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

R. Amen.

⁹⁰Klopf, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

light of a burning candle, and thus walk in His light until we behold the light eternal.⁹¹

The Gandlemas procession follows the Blessing of Candles.⁹² For the antiphons, responsory, and prayers used in the procession and for general directions see Table No. 4. In the Gandlemas procession the Church joins the procession of Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna to meet the King, a meeting which the Greek Church calls Hypapante.⁹³

The procession with lighted candles beautifully represents Christian life. The Light is Christ. We receive it of the Church, and carry it, like Simeon and Mary, in hand and heart, throughout this life on the pilgrimage to the holy place of heaven.⁹⁴

The festival celebrated on February 2 gets its name "Gandlemas" from the traditional procession with lighted candles but also from another custom. In the Eucharist on this day there is the custom of having the worshippers hold lighted candles during the Holy Gospel and from the Sanctus through the Communion.⁹⁵

The customs observed in the church on Gandlemas reflect and underline the basic thoughts of the feast and of the Epiphany season. Manifestation, missions, joy, worship, light run through all the ceremonies. Light is an especially prominent motif. Parsch summarizes the feast from the point

⁹¹Maering, op. cit., p. 22.

⁹²Maering, op. cit., p. 479.

⁹³Maering, op. cit., p. 479.

⁹⁴Maering, op. cit., p. 21.

⁹⁵Lutheran Church Calendar, February notes.

TABLE 4

The Candlemas Procession⁹⁶

The Choir sings the *Nunc Dimittis*. "A Light to Lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy People Israel" is sung both as an antiphon and as a refrain between each verse, including the *Gloria Patri*. While the *Nunc Dimittis* is thus sung, the people come to the communion rail to receive a candle, then return to their seats. When all have received candles, the pastor washes his hands at the credence, and turning to the people says:

V. Let us go forth in peace:
R. In the Name of Christ. Amen.

(The procession led by crucifer and torchbearers, the choir and celebrant following, is made, bearing the lights and chanting the following, or a proper hymn:)

Adorna Thalamum

O Zion, adorn thy bride-chamber; and receive Christ thy King.
Behold Mary, bearing in her arms the King of glory of the new light.
She remaineth a virgin; yet beareth a Son begotten before the morning star.
Whom Simeon took in his arms; declaring to all nations that he is Lord of life and death, and Savior of the world.

Responsum Accipit

It was revealed unto Simeon by the Holy Ghost; that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
And when they brought the child into the temple, then took he Him in his arms, and blessed God and said: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.

The Hymn "Thou Light of Gentile Nations"

Obtulerunt

(Shall be sung while returning to the altar)

They offered for him unto the Lord a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons; as it is written in the law of the Lord.

⁹⁶Klopf, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; For a detailed explanation of the blessing of candles and of the procession according to the Roman rite see John Baptist Mueller, *Handbook of Ceremonies*, revised and edited by Adam C. Ellis (Tenth English edition; St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co., 1940), pp. 263-268.

of view of light in this way:

Wie schön ist doch Heute die Symbolik des Lichtes! Wir empfangen die Kerze aus der Hand der Kirche . . . Was bedeutet das? Die Kirche gibt uns immer wieder Christus und das göttliche Leben. Wir tragen heute in der Procession das brennende Licht! Das ist Sinnbild des Christenlebens; so sollen wir Christus in uns tragen. Mit dem Lichte ziehen wir nach der Procession in die Kirche ein; da ist das Gotteshaus Sinnbild des Himmels; so wandern wir mit Christus durch das Leben in den Himmel. Besonders schön aber und sinnvoll ist es, dass in der heutigen Messe die Gläubigen während der Verkündigung des Evangeliums und während des Kanons bis zur Kommunion brennende Kerzen in Händen tragen. Was bedeutet das? Im Evangelium und im Kanon ist Christus unter uns gegenwärtig. Deshalb werden sonst im Hochamt zu diesen zwei Zeitpunkten Lichter und Weihrauch gebraucht. Heute aber sagt die Kirche: eigentlich solltet ihr bei jeder Messe die Lichter in den Händen tragen; die Lichtträger stehen an eurer Stelle; heute aber übt ihr selbst diesen Dienst des allgemeinen Priestertums aus." So ist die heutige Feiertagsmesse eine wahre "Lichtmesse," fast die einzige des Jahres!⁹⁷

As an expression of joy and of the divinity of Christ, white is the color of the vestments and paraments used on this feast as in all of Epiphany.⁹⁸

For those who could not attend church or for those whose church does not practice the Candlemas procession, a prayer of blessing and a procession in the home is suggested. The father leads in the devotion and the procession of lighted candles proceeds through the house.⁹⁹

On Candlemas a para-liturgical service is suggested in which young

⁹⁷Op. cit., p. 100.

⁹⁸Lutheran Church Calendar, February notes; Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 635.

⁹⁹Therese Mueller, op. cit., p. 19.

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