



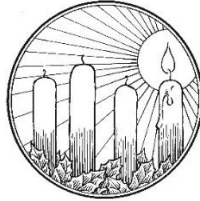
ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



First Sunday in Advent

December 1, 2024



A Real Christmas

A Real Christmas Requires Remembering Why Christ Came

It is easy to get so caught up in the imagery – a tiny newborn baby, lying in the straw filled manger under a star-filled sky – that we forget the why. Why did the Son of God come into our world and take on human flesh? So that he might die as the sacrifice for our sins. One Christmas carol puts it this way. “Neither crib nor cross refuses, all he suffers for your good to redeem you by his blood.”

Advent marks the start of a new Church Year. We begin at the end, watching Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey colt, knowing full well that he would be killed before the end of the week. The events of Palm Sunday serve as a microcosm for all Jesus’ work, proving the Son of God was willing to humble himself and endure anything for our salvation. That is precisely why Christ came. And a real Christmas requires remembering why Christ came.

First Reading³

Jeremiah 33:14-16

The LORD promised that a descendant of King David would be our righteous Savior. Again and again the Lord had promised blessings for his people, if they would only obey his commands. Yet generation after generation had turned away from the Lord and sought self over Savior. When Jeremiah heard the Word of the Lord he was experiencing the wrath of the Lord carried out on rebellious Judah. To the faithful, come words of promise: Justice will be carried out on the wicked and there will be deliverance. The line of David will continue as a “righteous branch” sprouts. He comes to restore the desolate land and the decimated people. He comes to bring peace and safety. He comes to bring life. Therefore he will be called “the Lord Our Righteousness.”

Second Reading³

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Christ came the first time so that by his saving work we might be found blameless and holy when he comes again. Therefore the Apostle St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians and all believers – those who know the Christ’s deliverance from sin – to continue living lives of faith and hope in the promise that the Lord Jesus will come again to bring us to eternal life.

Gospel³

Luke 19:28-40

Our humble King comes in majesty. For he comes to do the will of the Father. He comes to bring salvation, righteousness, and peace: peace in heaven and glory in the highest! He came as the fulfillment of scripture, as the answer to mankind’s problem, as the Hope for all the true Israel of God. On this day, the king would have his praise, from the stones if necessary. Behold the King had returned to his own city to win peace and salvation for all.

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 24 C

“Lift Up Your Heads”

The Church sings Psalm 24 in services on the First Sunday in Advent and Palm Sunday, both anticipating the arrival of Christ the Lord. The psalm is a processional liturgy for the entrance of the King of glory into Zion. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 24 is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ in all the world. It calls on the ‘doors’ of the word, that is, kings and princes, to make room for the kingdom of Christ; for they are the usual ones who rage against him (Psalms 1 and 2), and say, ‘Who is this King of glory?’”

Gospel Acclamation Zechariah 9:9

“See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey.” The exiled Jews to whom Zechariah prophesied would find restoration not through battle with the enemy, but through a king in a time of peace. Zechariah provided hope for the tiny remnant returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the Lord’s temple. For this is the way of the Lord’s salvation: Our gentle King comes with power to restore eternal peace.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength, and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day 301 “Savior of the Nations, Come” (Ambrose, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

Originally written (in Latin) by the great fourth century theologian, Ambrose (and later translated into German by Martin Luther), this hymn was designated for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day – a fitting choice due to its focus on the miracle of the incarnation.

Church Year Season³ Advent

Advent is a season of preparation and anticipation. The Church looks for the coming of her Savior in this threefold advent: his coming in the flesh as a baby in Bethlehem, his return in judgment on the Last Day, and his present coming to us in Word and Sacrament. The Church encompasses all these facets of the season in a single word that defines Advent worship: “Come!” Throughout the prayers, hymns, and readings that single word is our invitation, our anticipation, our sure and certain hope. Come, Lord Jesus!

Colors & Symbolism Blue

The traditional color for Advent is purple. Advent is a penitential season of preparation for Christmas; thus the color purple which symbolizes sorrow and repentance (along with royalty). Since another theme of Advent is hope and anticipation, the color blue (the sky) has come to be used in many churches to symbolize the believer’s hope and expectation of Jesus’ Second Coming.

Traditions The Advent Wreath

A tradition of the Advent season is the lighting of candles on a wreath. Each light reminds us of Jesus, the Light of the world (John 8:12). Each Sunday we light an additional candle, providing a visual countdown to the celebration of Christ’s birth. On Christmas Eve we light the center candle, remembering Jesus’ nativity and the light and life that he brings (John 1:4,9).

Nain Paraments Advent

Superfrontal: “Come Lord Jesus” is the Advent (meaning “coming” or “arrival”) prayer of Christians who await Christ’s promised return (Revelation 22:7,12,20) on the Last Day (Revelation 22:17,20), and who desire to eagerly receive Jesus now in the Gospel. The stars are representative of the Church’s anticipation of Jesus’ return when he will “appear in the sky...with great power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30). The stars also remind us of God’s creative work. They especially remind us of Jesus, the bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16) and Light of the World (John 8:12) who came to save us from the darkness of sin and death.

Lectern antependium: Chi (X) and Rho (P) are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (Χριστός). This ancient symbol represents Jesus and his office as the Messiah, the anointed King of kings and Savior of the world (Matthew 16:16).

Pulpit antependium: Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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