

THE SERVICE EXPLAINED

FOR USE IN CHURCH BULLETINS

BY
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THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Today we enter a new holy year of grace. Advent is a penitential season in preparation for Christmas; hence the violet vestments, the omission of the Gloria in Excelsis, and the absence of flowers.

As a waiting people, we express in the Introit our longing for God's promised salvation.

In the Collect we pray for the coming of Christ and for a stirring up of our faith.

God tells us in the Epistle that a new day is dawning and we must put on the Lord Jesus.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are meditations on our salvation in Christ.

Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel about His coming. This includes His entry into Jerusalem on the way to the Cross. So the Cross of Christ, which is the center of our redemption, is set before us at the very beginning of the new Church Year.

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THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The Introit is the herald's announcement. "Daughter of Zion" (that means us), the Lord is coming. This means salvation and gladness of heart. Psalm 80 is more solemn, emphasizing our longing for Christ's coming to save us.

In the Collect the important idea of preparing the way is expressed for the first time. This is stated again and again from now on. On the part of God, Advent means the sending of Christ; on our part, the preparing of His way.

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God speaks to us in the Epistle about the use of the Holy Scriptures and the need of our being likeminded. Christ calls Jews and Gentiles to faith. This should fill us with joy and peace at Christmas.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse direct our minds from the first to the second Advent of Christ.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about His coming in power and glory. When this happens, we are to "look up and lift our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh."

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THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The Introit leads us into the mood of this Sunday's worship. It begins with the word, "Rejoice." The cause of rejoicing is the advent of Christ.

The Collect brings out the contrast between darkness and light. We pray that God may enlighten our darkness by His gracious visitation.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the holy ministry and also the Lord's coming. The coming of Christ brings Christmas joy and peace.

The Gradual expresses longing for the Saviour and the Alleluia Verse is a typical Advent cry.

In the Gospel Our Lord declares Himself to be the promised Messiah, Saviour, and Physician. St. John the Baptist is to prepare His way, and that is also what we are to do.

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THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The antiphon of the Introit is Isaiah's great Advent cry. The Psalm is no. 19, one of the Advent psalms.

In the Collect the Church prays: Stir up, come. We must be prepared for Christ's coming. This preparation rests on the mercy of God.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by St. Paul about our expectation: "The Lord is at hand."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a meditation on the fact that the Lord is nigh to all that call on God.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about His forerunner, St. John the Baptist. The

message of St. John is, "Make straight the way of the Lord."

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CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT SERVICE

In the Introit the Church thinks about the deity and humanity of Christ. Begotten of the Father from eternity, this Son of God is now come into the flesh. His foes may rage, but He reigns with strength.

The divine Light has come and we pray in the Collect that we may see it in fulness of joy in heaven. The many candle lights in church are a symbol of the brightness of the divine Light.

In the Epistle, Titus 2:11-14, Gos speaks to us about the results of Christmas in our lives. The coming of the Light calls for our living in the light.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a meditation on the eternal birth of Christ. He was born for us so that we might be born again and all our enemies be trodden underfoot.

Luke 2:1-14 is the first Christmas Gospel. The shepherds kept vigil and so do we at midnight. The light of God's brightness appeared to them and so it appears to us this night in Christ.

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THE FIRST CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE

In the Introit the Church chants the glorious person of the Christ-child born in humility. Read all of Psalm 93.

The Collect is a prayer for freedom from the "old bondage" of sin through our "new birth" in Christ.

In the Epistle, Titus 3:4-7, the incarnate Saviour is that Light which was poured into our hearts in Holy Baptism.

We praise the Saviour in the Gradual and Alleluia Verse as the King of glory and strength who has "showed us light."

In the Gospel, Luke 2:15-20, we are the shepherds who come with joy and kneel at the

manger. Then we return to glorify God.

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THE SECOND CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE

In the Introit we give homage to the little Child as the Governor of the world. We rejoice, we sing, for God has done marvelous things.

We pray in the Collect that the "new birth" may deliver us from the "old bondage" and give us freedom.

The Epistle, Hebrews 1:1-12, fits the theme of Christmas beautifully. Before us is the picture of the Ruler of the world who in His incarnation is the heir of all things.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we sing: the day has come. All the world has seen the salvation of God. Worship the new born Saviour.

The Gospel, John 1:1-14, proclaims Christ to be the divine Light shining into the darkness of the world. The world does not comprehend, but to us He is the Light who comes today to dwell with us.

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ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR'S DAY, DECEMBER 26

In the Introit the Church identifies herself with St. Stephen in his persecution and trust in God. She does not mourn over his martyrdom, for the faithful are "blessed."

We pray in the Collect for faith to "behold the glory that shall be revealed" and that we may imitate St. Stephen's love for his enemies.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the arrest, trial, and martyrdom of St. Stephen.

The Alleluia Verse is a meditation on how St. Stephen saw the glorified Christ standing at the right hand of God.

Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel about God's messengers who were persecuted and killed in the Old Testament. St. Stephen is the first of the many martyrs to follow their line in the New Testament era.

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ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST'S DAY, DECEMBER 27

St. John is in his writings the great teacher of the Church for all times. For this we thank and praise God in the Introit.

In the Collect we pray for the attainment of the light of everlasting life through the light of the Word proclaimed by St. John.

The Epistle is the message of St. John concerning Christ the eternal Son of God who was made flesh to redeem us. Through Christ we have fellowship with God and we must live in the light of God.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse is a meditation on following Christ as did St. John. We rejoice in his testimony and affirm our faith in it.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about the life of St. John and the truth of his testimony.

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THE HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY

In the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents, the Church sings in the Introit the power of God as seen in weakness, even of babes and sucklings.

The Collect is a prayer that we may mortify all vices within us.

The Epistle gives us a vision of the Innocents in heaven, "for they are without fault before the throne of God."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a song of praise to Him through whom our soul is escaped as a bird out of a snare.

In the Gospel we hear how Herod, being full of wrath, slew all the male children in Bethlehem from two years old and under.

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THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

The Introit (the second) takes us back to the Holy Night. We see again the Child in the crib, but we see in Him also the heavenly King on His throne.

In the Collect we pray that our actions may be directed by God to do good works, which can be done only in the Name of the Christ of Christmas.

The Epistle combines Christmas with Easter. "God sent forth His Son...to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a song of adoration. Here again the Christmas and Easter ideas are combined.

In the Gospel the aged Simeon prophesies a bitter Cross for the Child and a deep sorrow for His mother. But it is the Redeemer's Cross of victory.

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THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

In the Introit we humbly come before Christ today, reverencing His holy name which was given Him when He was circumcised.

The Church is mindful in the Collect of Christ's mission and prays for the circumcision of the Spirit.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the purpose of the law and the faith in Jesus Christ by which we are justified.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a joyful song of salvation made known now by the Son of God Himself.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about His holy Name and His circumcision.

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THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

The Introit proclaims that the Child of Bethlehem is where His testimonies are: in His house, the Church. He is the Lord, the Victor, the Redeemer.

In the Collect we pray that our actions may be directed by God to do good works.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about our sufferings as Christians and comforts us with His grace.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a prayer and praise for salvation. The object of the praise is the holy Name of Christ.

In the Gospel the suffering and comfort of Christians is proclaimed by the Flight into Egypt, the Murder of the Holy Innocents, and the Return from Egypt.

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THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

The Introit is the climax and fulfillment of our Advent longing and hope. Our King has come to His city.

In the Collect we pray that as we have been led to faith in Christ, we may attain eternal life.

The Epistle is a vision of the New Testament era in which we live. Christ the Light of the world has come into His Church and the Gentiles come to the Light with their gifts.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we contemplate the thoughts of the Epistle and Gospel.

The picture of the Epistle finds its fulfillment in the Gospel. With the Wise Men we kneel down today in our worship of Christ the King.

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THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

With the Introit we enter the service and behold the glorious Epiphany picture: the Man on the throne, the holy angels surrounding Him, who is the Lord Omnipotent. Then we sing the 100th Psalm.

The Collect is a prayer that we may fulfill the will of God. This thought goes through the entire service.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about our highest duty: our bodies are to be a living sacrifice to God.

In the Gradual we bless God for His saving grace, and in the Alleluia Verse we repeat the theme: Serve the Lord with gladness.

Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel and shows Himself to us in His youth, dedicating Himself to do the Father's business.

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

The Introit today is a picture of adoration and worship of Christ as God. He is worshipped by all the saints in heaven and on earth.

The Collect is a prayer for peace.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. As members of this Body, we are to make the right use of our talents and to practice those virtues which promote union and communion.

The Gradual combines the Christmas miracle with Easter. God sent His Word (Christ) and delivered us (Easter). The Alleluia Verse continues the Easter praise.

In the Gospel Christ reveals Himself as God (Epiphany) in His first miracle. As He changed water into wine, so by the Holy Spirit, through Word and Sacrament, He still changes people from children of wrath to children of grace.

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THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

In the Introit we worship Christ in His Epiphany as God in man made manifest.

The Church prays God in the Collect to stretch forth His right hand for our help and defense.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about overcoming evil and loving our neighbors and enemies.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse praise Christ who has appeared in His glory. He appears to us today in our church worship.

Christ shows us His divinity in two miracles in today's Gospel. Sinners are converted and Gentiles come into the Kingdom.

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THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Again we see in the Introit an exalted picture of worship. The angels worship the King of heaven and the Church also worships Him.

The Collect of the Church is closely related to the Gospel. In our lives there also arises

... dangers threaten our souls from every side. We are afraid. We cry.

"Lord, help us, we perish."

God speaks to us in the Epistle about our duty to our government and to all our fellowmen. Our duty is to obey and to love. "Love is the fulfillment of the law."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse praise Christ who has appeared in His glory and power.

The Gospel is the stilling of the storm, another Epiphany of the glory of Christ. It is also a picture of the Church Militant on its voyage through the storms of life. This picture also applies to each individual Christian.

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THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

In the Introit we reverently and joyfully worship Christ the King. He has built Zion, the Church, and appears in His glory.

The Collect prays that God may stretch forth the right hand of His majesty for our help and defense.

The Epistle is a description of an ideal congregation which displays a whole catalog of Christian virtues. The greatest of these is love.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we rejoice in the reign of Christ who builds His Church in all the earth and whose glory is present in our church worship.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the Church on earth with its human weaknesses, sins, and foes. This will be the state of the Church until the day of Judgment.

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THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Christ's majesty is placed before us today in the Introit. His majesty fills the whole earth.

In the Collect the Church prays that we may be made co-heirs of the glory of Christ.

God speaks to us in the Epistle by the Apostle St. Peter, who gives us an eye-witness account of the Transfiguration.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on the glory of Christ and praise His Name.

Our Lord reveals Himself to us in the Gospel as the glorious Son of God.

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SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Septuagesima, seventieth, is the first of three pre-Lent Sundays. The Gloria in Excelsis and Alleluia are omitted.

The Introit is a prayer of Christ who begins His Passion, of the Church which is His Body, and of the individual Christian who is a member of His Body.

The Church on earth prays in the Collect, pleading for deliverance from the punishment of sin.

In the Epistle God lays down for us the program for Lent. We must diligently use the Word and Sacraments and practice self-denial and self-discipline.

The Gradual and Tract are a meditation on humanity's need for salvation.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. In it we are to work, not for reward, but out of gratitude for God's grace.

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SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

This is the second pre-Lent Sunday. Sexagesima means approximately the sixtieth day before Easter. What does the Church want to tell us on this Sunday? The Introit is a heart-rending cry out of the mouths of lost and condemned people, putting their faith in the grace of God.

In view of our helplessness, the Church prays to God in the Collect for deliverance from all evil.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by St. Paul about placing our life in His service and trusting in His all-sufficient grace.

In the Gradual and Tract we meditate on those who neglect God, imploring God to save them in His mercy.

In the Gospel Christ tells us the Parable of the Sower. Lent, the springtime of souls, is near and the Divine Sower sows the Gospel in the hearts of men.

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QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

In the Introit we pray with Christ for deliverance from our enemies.

The Collect is a prayer for deliverance from evil.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about the highest step in our Lenten preparation, the step of love.

In the Gradual and Tract we sing a song of thanksgiving and call upon all people to worship God.

Our Lord shows Himself to us in the Gospel on the way to His bitter Passion. The blind man whose eyes were opened is a picture of our conversion and renewal.

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ASH WEDNESDAY

The Introit is an expression of trust in the merciful God. Christian penitence includes both sorrow and faith.

In the Collect we pray that we may be penitent and that our penitence may be sincere.

The Epistle is an exhortation to repent taken from the Old Testament. In it all are to participate, young and old, people and priests. It is to be corporate penance.

In the Gradual and Tract we plead for mercy because of our guilt. But we also trust in the Easter redemption.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel of inner penance. And in doing so, He uncovers our deepest sin, pride, which shows itself even in fasting and penance. Then He directs our attention to the sin of materialism. We are to seek heavenly treasure by prayer, fasting, charity, spiritual exercises.

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INVOCAVIT, THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

In the Introit Christ comforts us as fellow fighters. After the Lenten Battle comes the Easter Victory.

The Collect is a prayer for this victory.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about our opportunities: "Receive not the grace of God in vain."

The Gradual and Tract are a meditation on the protection of the angels who ministered to Our Lord in His temptation.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about His fasting, temptation, and victory in the wilderness, Christ fights for us.

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REMINISCERE, THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Our sins and troubles are great, but God's grace is greater. It is on this account that we trustfully cry to God in the Introit.

The Collect is a prayer for help and salvation. In us there is no strength.

In the Epistle God warns us and pleads with us to make progress in our life in Christ.

Again we plead our troubles and express our trust for salvation through Christ in the Gradual and Tract.

The Gospel shows us the way to receive help. Like the Syrophenician woman, we must come to Christ with penitential, trusting, and persistent prayer.

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OCULI, THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

In the Introit our eyes are toward the Lord (the altar). We pray Him for mercy in our troubles, trusting His promises for deliverance.

The Collect is a plea for defense against our enemies.

In the Epistle God tells us to walk as His children. He warns us of the wrath which falls on the children of disobedience.

The Gradual and Tract are an appeal for help, coupled with confidence in the Deliverer.

Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel about the defeat of the strong one (the devil) by the stronger (Christ). This victory must become a reality in us through faith in Christ and we must beware of backsliding.

*

LAETARE, THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The Introit looks forward to the joy of Easter. By His death and resurrection, Christ made it possible for us to enter the House of the Lord (church, heaven) with joy.

In the Collect we pray for the benefits and blessings of Christ's redemptive work.

The Epistle speaks of the spiritual Jerusalem, the Church, "the children born after the Spirit."

In the Gradual and Tract we sing again the joyful entrance chant of the Introit.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the feeding of the multitude. He feeds us with the Bread of Life in the Church. Read the entire sixth chapter of Saint John.

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JUDICA, THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The more solemn part of Lent begins with this Judica or Passion Sunday and even the Gloria Patri is omitted. A change takes place in the chants. Until now, it was the Church praying in the Introit, Gradual and Tract. Now it is the suffering Christ. Today He pleads His case before His heavenly Father.

The Collect is a prayer for our preservation in our Christian faith.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about our divine High Priest going to the altar of the Cross.

The Gradual and Tract are again the words of Christ who prays in His Passion.

In the Gospel our Lord shows Himself as the sinless and eternal Son of God.

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PALMARUM, THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Palm Sunday begins the most solemn part of Lent. In the Introit and other chants, it is the suffering Christ who speaks with the words of Psalm 22.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by St. Paul about humility and glorification.

The Gradual and Tract are meditations on Christ's Passion, but also His glorious triumph.

In the Gospel our Lord shows us His kingly entry into Jerusalem, which marks the beginning of His atoning death and resurrection.

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MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

With Christ we plead in the Introit for help against our enemies. Christ quoted from this Psalm, Psalm 35.

The Collect is motivated by Christ's Passion: "that we may be restored through the Passion and intercession of Thine only-begotten Son."

In the Epistle the suffering Christ is speaking.

The Gradual and Tract are Christ's plea for righteous judgment and our plea for forgiveness.

In the Gospel we hear of anointing of Christ for His burial and the criticism of Judas Iscariot about the waste of the precious ointment.

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TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

The Introit chants the saving suffering of Christ, but here as in all the Introits of Holy Week, hope of Easter lies beyond the Passion.

In the Collect we pray for forgiveness of sins on the basis of Christ's Passion.

In the Epistle the prophet Isaiah speaks as a type of the suffering Saviour.

The words of Christ in His Passion are meditated on in the Gradual.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us of the corn of wheat which falls into the ground and

dies in order to live and bring forth much fruit.

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WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

In the Introit we see the universe bowing before Christ who became obedient unto death. Then we pray the penitential Psalm, Psalm 102.

The Collect is a prayer for deliverance from our afflictions by Christ's Passion.

In the Epistle we hear Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's sufferings.

The Gradual is Christ's plea in His Passion.

The Gospel is the Passion of Our Lord according to St. Luke.

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

In the Introit all the glory of the Redemption is before us. We almost forget the bitter Passion and think about the Resurrection.

The Collect carries the thought of the Redemption over into the prayer for its fruits in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Epistle is the account of the institution of the Holy Communion Service.

In the Gradual we meditate on Christ's humility and obedience unto death and His glorious exaltation and victory.

Christ gives us in the Gospel an example of humble service and commands us to love one another.

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GOOD FRIDAY

The Introit expresses the deep meaning of Christ's Passion.

In the Collect we pray for mercy on the Church for which Christ suffered and died.

The Epistle is the wonderful prophecy of Isaiah regarding the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

In the first two verses of the Tract the suffering Saviour speaks of His Passion.

In the last verse we think about His suffering for our redemption.

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HOLY SATURDAY, EASTER EVE

The Collect anticipates the Easter dawn and recalls the custom of administering the sacrament of Holy Baptism on this day or night.

The Epistle speaks of the connection between Christ's death and resurrection and Holy Baptism.

The Gospel is the account of Christ's burial.

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EASTER DAY, THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

The risen Christ stands before us and speaks the first words after His resurrection in the Introit. In His mystical Body all Christians are united with God.

The Collect is a prayer for a new life on the basis of Christ's victory over death.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the old Passover as a type of Easter. Christ, our Easter Lamb, is sacrificed for us. We must put away the old leaven of sin.

The Alleluia Verses repeat the main theme of Easter as revealed in the Epistle. We thank and praise God for the Easter blessing.

In the Gospel we play the part of the holy women who came to the sepulchre. Out of the mouth of the angel (minister) we hear the good news.

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EASTER MONDAY

The Introit chants the joy of the people of God (baptized) in the Promised Land (church). This requires our doing God's will, thanking Him, and making Him known to all people.

The Church prays in the Collect for perfect freedom.

God speaks to us in the Epistle by St. Peter who portrays Christ to Cornelius and

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse chant the theme of Easter.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about His resurrection and meeting with the Emmaus disciples.

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EASTER TUESDAY

Baptism, Eucharist, and the Resurrection are chanted in the Introit.

In the Collect the Church prays for us that we may celebrate Easter not only in heart but also in life.

The Epistle is God's Word by St. Paul about Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse the Easter theme is chanted.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about His resurrection. We hear out of His mouth the word of peace.

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QUASIMODOGENITI, THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The work of our redemption by Christ, for which Easter stands, has made our new birth in Holy Baptism possible. We must now be nourished by Word and Sacrament and grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ.

The Collect is a prayer for bringing forth the fruits of Easter in our life.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the power of faith. Faith overcomes the world, "not by water only, but by water and blood," not by baptism only, but by baptism and Holy Communion.

In the Alleluia Verses we chant the wonderful meaning of Easter.

The Gospel shows that our faith, confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, is sure even without seeing. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

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MISERICORDIAS DOMINI, THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The name of this Sunday comes from the Introit. It means "the goodness of the Lord." We praise His goodness in creation, but especially in the redemption celebrated in Eastertide.

The Collect is a prayer for perpetual Easter gladness.

The Epistle is a word of God by St. Peter about following Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

In the Alleluia Verses we meditate on Christ as our Good Shepherd.

In the Gospel the Good Shepherd Himself speaks to us. He has given His life for His sheep and brings them into a living communion with Himself through His Word and Sacraments.

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JUBILATE, THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Jubilate means rejoice. Unfailing joy is the Church's Easter possession. Christ has freed us from all our enemies.

The Collect looks back on our former state. We were in the error of sin and darkness, but by the grace of God have become Christians. We pray that we may live a life worthy of the name of Christ.

In the Epistle God reminds us that we are pilgrims and strangers on earth. We must do our duty to God in this life, but keep free from earthly attachments.

The Alleluia Verses meditate on the redemptive work of Christ, which we celebrate in Eastertide.

In the Gospel Our Lord speaks to us about our sorrows being turned into joys. After the little while of our earthly pilgrimage, we shall have perfect and eternal joy.

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CANTATE, THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

We sing a new song (Introit) because God has made known His salvation. That His

salvation is made known is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the Collect we pray with the Church that the minds of the faithful be of one will in Christ. This is also the work of the Holy Spirit. The goal of this unity is eternal life in heaven.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about the good and perfect gift. This gift is the Holy Spirit who in Holy Baptism begat us with the Word of Truth. This gift is to express itself in our behavior.

The Alleluia Verses are our song of praise to the almighty power of God, which won the victory over sin, Satan, and death.

In the Gospel Christ speaks of His ascension into heaven and the sending of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes the work of Christ in the Church through the Word and Sacraments.

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ROGATE, THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Today and the three Rogation Days preceding the Feast of the Ascension are special days of prayer. In the Introit we pray Psalm 66, the canticle of the resurrection.

The Collect is a prayer for a right faith and a right life.

In the Epistle God tells us that we are not only to be hearers of the Word, but also doers.

The Alleluia Verses repeat the joy of Easter and look forward to Our Lord's Ascension.

In the Gospel Christ assures us that our prayers in His Name will be heard. He also foretells the joy of His disciples in His ascension.

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THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

The Introit is a picture of the Church looking steadfastly and longingly to heaven and awaiting Christ's return. We sing the Ascension Psalm, Psalm 47.

In the Collect we pray that with Christ we, too, may be in heaven in heart and mind.

Both the Epistle and Gospel unite us with Christ in His last days on earth (visibly). In both is emphasized that He ate a meal with His disciples. He now comes to us in the Lord's Supper.

The Alleluia Verses chant the ascension of Christ.

In the Gospel the ascension of Christ is proclaimed.

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EXAUDI, THE SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

The prevailing note on this Sunday between the Feast of the Ascension and the Feast of Pentecost is expectation of the promised Holy Spirit. The Introit also looks forward to the second advent of Christ.

The Collect is a prayer for a genuine Christian life.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by St. Peter about growing into the holy fellowship of the Church, joining in common prayer, practicing forgiveness, bearing witness, and all this to the glory of God.

The Alleluia Verses are a song to the ascended Lord with the longing for His coming again.

In the Gospel Our Lord speaks to us about two things: the Holy Ghost will come and make Himself known in the Church; and we must witness for Christ.

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THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

It is the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the world, over which we rejoice in the Introit. The Holy Spirit now lives in the hearts of all God's people. The Psalm verse is from Psalm 68, the Church's victory song of the ages.

The Collect is a prayer for God's wisdom and comfort by the Holy Spirit.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about the events of Pentecost, which are renewed

in the service today.

The Alleluia Verses invoke the Holy Spirit as the giver of life and love.

In the Gospel Our Lord describes the work of the Holy Spirit, who builds God's temple, reveals and teaches His Word, bestows the gift of peace, and gives the courage of martyrdom. We receive these gifts today through Word and Sacraments.

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MONDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK

The Introit chants the work of the Holy Spirit in His live-giving and life-nourishing work.

In the Collect the Church prays for her children that they may live in prayer and peace.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit.

In the Alleluia Verses we chant the theme of Pentecost and pray for the Holy Spirit.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about God's redeeming love for the world and justification through faith in Himself as the God-Man Saviour.

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TUESDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK

In the Introit we rejoice over our call into the heavenly kingdom by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

The Collect is a prayer for God's wisdom and comfort by the Holy Spirit.

In the Epistle we hear how the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by the Apostles.

In the Alleluia Verses we chant the theme of Pentecost and pray for the Holy Spirit.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about Himself as the door. Only through Him is there entrance into God's Kingdom.

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THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

In the Introit the Triune God appears before us in might, glory, and beauty. We praise Him for His mercy and for His power revealed in creation.

Acknowledging the glory of the Holy Trinity, we pray in the Collect for faith and deliverance.

The Epistle expresses astonishment over the mystery of the Holy Trinity. "From Him (Father), through Him (Son), and in Him (Holy Spirit), are all things."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse contemplate the omnipresence of God.

The Holy Gospel is the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus. Our Lord speaks to us about the work of the Triune God in our redemption and sanctification.

*

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit we praise God for His bountiful mercy in the redemptive work of Christ. This is the answer to our separation from God by sin and in it we trust and rejoice.

The Collect is a prayer for God's help to enable us to live according to His will. It is by His power alone that we can please Him.

From the Epistle we learn that the mercy and love of God must lead us to love our fellowmen.

The thought of God's love and our duty to love lead to the meditation of the Gradual and Alleluia Verse and bring us to our knees in prayer.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the consequences of man's failure to be merciful and about the solution to the problem of salvation. To obtain forgiveness of sins and deliverance from hell, we must make use of Word and Sacraments.

*

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

As we come before God today, we remember in the Introit His wonderful grace.

He redeemed us, He called us, He rescued us, because He loved us. Therefore we sing a song of praise, love, and trust.

We pray in the Collect that we may fear and love God's Name. Without reverent fear, there can be no love.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about love. Christ gave His life to save us and we must love Him and our fellowmen.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are solemn and pleading, in contrast to the other parts of the service. We have failed much in our duty to love.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel. This Gospel is an invitation to receive all the blessings God has prepared for us. These blessings are pictured by a fellowship meal. The meal consists of everything offered to us in the Church through Word and Sacrament.

*

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit we approach God, the Good Shepherd, as sinners needing help. The Introit Psalm No. 25 is a prayer of trust and humility. It expresses the attitude of a lost sheep restored by Christ.

The Collect is a prayer to God as the protector of all who trust in Him, asking for strength and holiness.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the devil as a roaring lion. Either we follow Christ the Good Shepherd or else we shall become a prey of the devil.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a meditation on the Good Shepherd as our Strength, Rock, and Fortress.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about the sinner-seeking love of God in two parables: the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin.

*

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

We come into the House of God out of our weekday conflicts in the world. We feel

our need and plead for help in the Introit. But we are also confident. Outwardly the Church is beset with suffering; inwardly it is strong in Christ.

The Collect is a prayer for peace, inward and outward peace, so that we may worship and serve God quietly.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the sufferings of this present time which are necessary for our salvation. It is an Epistle with lofty and deep thoughts. It expresses the longing for complete redemption from all evil of man and even nature itself.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse continue to meditate on sin and suffering. We flee to God for forgiveness and help.

In the Gospel Our Lord speaks to us about mercy and Love. As God is merciful and forgiving, we His children must also be merciful, forgiving, and kind.

*

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit the Church (each Christian soul) pleads for help, but also expresses confident trust in God. This is the proper attitude for worship.

In the Collect we pray for love. To love God is not a human achievement. It can only be poured into our hearts by God Himself.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by St. Peter and tells us to be one in prayer, love, and grace. We were made one in Christ through Holy Baptism. Our behavior, therefore, must conform to what we are.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a meditation on God's protection and our looking up to Christ, who won the Easter victory and is now the Ruler of the universe.

In the Holy Gospel Our Lord speaks to us about our being fishers of men. In this picture we see the Church as the place for the salvation of souls. The great Fisher of Men is Christ and in Him all Christians are fishers of men.

*

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit was originally the song of entrance into the church. Today it expresses consciousness of being annointed (Holy Baptism) God's people and heirs. So we come before God's presence with confidence.

In the Collect we pray for love of God's Name, true religion, and nourishment in all goodness, all of which are gifts of God.

The Epistle speaks of Easter and our renewal in Holy Baptism. "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death;" therefore, "walk in newness of life," for we are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ."

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse the shortness of man's earthly life is contrasted with God's eternity. We express sorrow for sins and trust in God's mercy.

In the Gospel Our Lord speaks to us about the law of God. This law is love. Hatred is the same as murder and no gift, prayer, or sacrifice is acceptable to God without love.

*

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit gives the spirit of the day. Today it is the Easter spirit. Christ has subdued the enemy of our soul under us.

In the Collect we pray God, who watches over us, for those things which shall advance our life in Him.

In the Epistle God shows us by St. Paul our blessedness and our duty as Christians. He points this out in a contrasting picture: the slave of sin and the servant of God.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we sing of the fear of God and our joy in God's mercy.

The Gospel is a picture of the Holy Communion Service. On Sundays "much people" is gathered with Christ. Christ first preaches (Epistle, Gospel, Sermon). He says, "I have compassion on the multitude." The week is long. "If I let them go away hungry, they

will perish." Therefore, He feeds us with the Bread of Life (the Word and Blessed Sacrament).

*

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Every Sunday is Easter Day. In that spirit we chant the Introit and enter the church, the temple. We behold the majesty of the Lord and remember with gratitude our Easter blessing, the "loving kindness."

The Collect is in line with the theme of the day: Children of light, right faith, and right living according to the will of God.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by St. Paul about the making of a Christian by the Holy Spirit. He shows this in the contrast between the spiritual and the carnal man.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we sing of trust in Christ and living according to the Word of God.

In the Gospel Our Lord warns against false prophets and distinguishes between the true and false life. As the tree is known by its fruit, so a Christian is known by doing the will of God.

*

THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit Psalm describes the Christian life which is a battle and should end in victory. But this victory is not our own. And so we plead for God's help and the strength of Christ's Easter victory.

In the Collect we confess that we are weak and unwise children of God. Therefore we ask God to make us pray for such things as will please Him.

The Epistle is an earnest warning. God speaks to us by St. Paul, giving us examples of unfaithfulness from the history of Israel. He warns and gives the assurance: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" and "He will not tempt you above that which you can bear."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a prayer of confidence and praise to the risen and enthroned Christ.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us the parable of the unjust steward. The unjust steward is not praised for his injustice, but for his prudence in securing his earthly welfare. Such prudence and determination of the people of the world should serve us Christians as an example in seeking our eternal welfare.

*

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In and with the Church we appear before God today, pleading in the Introit for His help in our troubles. God will hear us. He abides of old. He reveals His power in showing mercy and pity.

So we pray in the Collect for a larger measure of His grace, that we may obtain the heavenly treasure and live according to His will.

In the Epistle God tells us to live in the Spirit as members of the Body of Christ, the Church, and to serve that Body. Everyone has his gifts to be used for the glory of God.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are a plea for God's protection against our foes and an expression of trust in God's salvation.

In the Gospel our Lord warns us against neglecting and repelling the grace of God. Christ weeps over the sins of His people. A baptized person can become a backslider. If the temple of your soul has become a den of thieves, then permit Christ to cleanse it.

*

THE ELVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In today's Introit we are made mindful of what the Church is. It is the dwellingplace of God, the Fatherhouse of God's family. Here God's children gather on the Lord's Day. The Introit reveals two sides of the Christian life: Peace in the redemption and the battle against the forces of evil.

God's goodness is great. He does more than we desire or deserve. In the Collect we pray for an abundance of His mercy.

The Epistle teaches God's grace: "By the grace of God I am what I am."

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are in a joyful mood. We praise God because His goodness and mercy are eternal.

In the Gospel our Lord speaks to us about God's grace for penitent sinners. The parable becomes a reality in this service. You are the humble publican. You repent and receive pardon. You go home from the House of God justified.

*

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit begins with the age-old cry of humanity suffering the results of sin. Both Matins and Vespers begin with these words. Then follows a plea for deliverance from our spiritual enemies.

In the Collect we admit our dependence on God and pray that we may serve Him here and finally attain eternal life hereafter.

The Epistle contrasts the Law and the Gospel and shows the gloriousness of the Gospel as compared with the Law.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are songs of praise for the blessings that are ours through the Gospel.

This Sunday's Gospel tells how Christ opened the ears of the deaf man. After being delivered from afflictions, the man brings forth the fruits of faith by a life of thanksgiving and service. This we must do also.

*

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit we chant: "Have respect, O Lord, unto Thy covenant." The ministry of the New Covenant is to proclaim the Gospel of God's grace.

The Collect prays for the three great Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity.

The Epistle is a lesson on faith itself, faith in the promises of God by which we are assured of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we cry to God for mercy and pity as we realize our failures and the power of our enemies.

The Gospel brings us the picture of the Good Samaritan. This parable teaches us the great principle of the Christian life—love to the neighbor, the neighbor being everyone in need. In the person of the Good Samaritan is portrayed also our Blessed Saviour who took pity on us in our need, healed our wounds of sin, and saved us from eternal death.

*

THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit chants the Church's (our) love for the house of God and the worship of God through Christ.

In the Collect the Church prays for grace and God's help to do the things profitable for our salvation.

Gos speaks to us in the Epistle by the Apostle St. Paul. He contrasts the works of the flesh with the works of the Spirit and admonishes us "to walk in the Spirit."

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on the fact that to walk in the Spirit is to live thankfully.

Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel and tells us the story of the ten lepers. Like the grateful Samaritan, we should come to kneel down before God in worship and thanksgiving for the healing of body and soul which He has provided for us by His redemptive work.

*

THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

With the Introit we come into the House of God today in an earnest and pleading spirit like that of strangers and pilgrims. The heavy burden of sin and the conflicts of the week cause us to lift up our soul to God, seeking peace and joy.

In the Collect we pray for the continual pity, help and goodness of God, which are necessary for the cleansing and defending of the Church.

The Epistle is a continuation from last Sunday. It lays on our hearts a number of requirements for the Christian life.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse remind us that to walk in the Spirit means to trust in God. Such trust leads to the praise of God with the Easter alleluia.

In the Gospel our Lord speaks to us about the impossibility of compromise with evil and the necessity of a deep trust in the fatherly goodness of God. Our righteousness through faith in Christ makes us children of the heavenly Father.

*

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

This Sunday begins the closing period of the Church Year. Our thoughts are directed to the future: the end of our earthly existence, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. The Introit is a cry for mercy and an expression of trust in the grace of God.

The Collect is a prayer for the grace of God which we need constantly.

On this Sunday we begin to hear St. Paul's epistles written during his imprisonment in Rome. Today's emphasizes our being strengthened in the inner man.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we have a vision of the end of the world when Christ shall appear in His glory and we express our faith in Him who is our Help and Shield.

In the Gospel our Lord assures of by example of the resurrection in a double sense. He gives us a new divine life in this world and He will restore our bodies to life on the day of resurrection.

*

THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit today the Church is full of understanding and trust. God is just and merciful. Her concern is to finish her pilgrimage "undefiled."

The Collect too, is a pilgrim's prayer. It prays for grace to withstand temptation and to do God's will.

In the Epistle God exhorts us to walk worthy of our Christian calling in lowliness and love. Especially are we to maintain the bond of love and peace.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse contemplate the blessings of the Church whose strength is in God. In this strength the Church triumphs.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about Himself as the Great Physician and about the virtue of humility.

*

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Today the church building is a picture of heaven. Psalm 122, the Pilgrim's Song, is the Introit Psalm. We wait for Christ and hear His word. We pray and look forward with joy to our entrance into heaven.

Conscious of our helplessness, we pray in the Collect for the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The Church Year is coming to the end. In the Epistle the Church looks back. She is thankful for God's grace. And confident that God will help her, she looks forward to Christ's return.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on our peace and prosperity in God's house and we call upon all nations to praise the Lord.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the commandment to love, but especially about Himself as the Son of God and victorious Ruler of the world.

*

THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

As we enter the service today we ask for and receive a word of comfort. God is our Saviour and Deliverer. But Christ also speaks a word of warning. We must be concerned about hearing and doing His Word.

The Collect is a pilgrim's pray. On our journey heavenward we ask for deliverance from all harm and for the ability to do God's will in body and soul.

The Epistle speaks to us about putting off the old man and putting on the new man and to exercise love, for we are members of the Body of Christ.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse meditate on life's evening prayer and the joy of the Easter redemption.

In the Gospel today we are the paralytic. We receive forgiveness and a new life (Baptism, the Word, the Holy Communion). Christ's word to the paralytic will mean to us at length, "Arise (resurrection) and go into thy house (heaven)."

*

THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

We enter the service today confessing our sins. But we plead God's mercy and express our longing for the mountain of holiness (heaven) where we shall join the multitude in the praise of the Lord.

In the Collect we pray for pardon and peace and that we may serve God with a quiet mind.

The Epistle implies our pilgrimage. As such, we are to walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, be filled with the Holy Spirit, praise God, and serve one another.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we ponder on our pilgrimage. God will provide for all our needs, but we shall also pass through great sufferings.

Christ tells us the parable of the Marriage Feast in the Gospel. It is not enough just to belong to the church. We must have on the wedding garment-faith. The visit of the King reminds us of Christ's second Coming.

*

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit we see Almighty God upon the throne. But by the Law of the Lord (the Means of Grace) the righteousness of Christ has become our own. We can stand before Judge undefiled. Nothing can harm us who belong to God.

The Collect is a prayer for God's protection and the ability to serve Him.

The Epistle speaks about the last days of the earth, "the evil days," It shows us our en-

emies and the weapons we are to use against them.

In view of the evil days, we meditate in the Gradual and Alleluia Verse on the abiding protection of God and the blessedness of those who trust in Him.

The Gospel shows us such trust. The nobleman reveals a firm, living faith. Likewise, our faith must be one that will battle through all adversities, a faith that holds to God.

*

THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

We enter the service today conscious of the Judgment. Burdened with sins, we cry to the Lord. But we trust in His mercy and His promise to forgive for Christ's sake.

In the Collect we pray that God will hear our prayers of faith and grant our requests.

The Epistle speaks about the good work God began in us by making us Christians. So far as He is concerned, He will continue this until the day (return) of Christ. But on our part we must be fruitful trees, abounding in good works.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we find comfort in the communion of saints and sing the forgiving, healing and life-giving grace of God in Christ.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the great day of accounting. God is gracious to forgive, but not if we are unwilling to forgive.

*

THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In the Introit God comforts us with the word of peace. He has brought us out of captivity of sin and will gather us into His heavenly kingdom.

We pray in the Collect for deliverance from the bondage of sin.

The Epistle is a plea that we may not be "enemies of the Cross of Christ," and live materialistic lives, but that we may belong to the faithful whose names are written in the Book of Life. Then when Christ comes, He will change our sinful bodies and make them like His glorified body.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on the bliss of heaven and sing of confidence and trust in God.

The Gospel shows the greatness of Christ in face of His enemies. Let us learn to fulfill our duty on earth. We have a duty to God and to men.

*

THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit expresses our feeling as we are gathered together before God in His house. He is our Maker, Lord and Saviour. Therefore, we worship, bow, kneel, and stand before Him in humility and praise.

In the Collect we pray for a stirring up of our wills to bring forth the fruits of faith.

The Epistle exhorts us to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, to walk worthy of the Lord, to be fruitful, patient, joyful, and to look forward to our inheritance in heaven. For Christ has redeemed us and in Him we have forgiveness of sins.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we express our love of God who has delivered us from the darkness of sin and brought us into His light.

The Gospel is a picture of our resurrection and the healing of our souls. Because of our redemption, death is no longer death, but only a sleep.

*

THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

As the Church begins her worship on this third last Sunday in the Church Year, she looks forward in the Introit to the end of the world and eternal life.

In the Collect the Church prays that we, who have no merits of our own, may be saved by God's mercy.

The Epistle is very comforting. Christ will come again on the last day and then we shall ever be with the Lord.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on our spiritual enemies and on the Means of Grace by which God keeps us from all harm.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the end of the world and the final judgment. Our concern is to remain steadfast in the faith of Christ our Saviour.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit is a prayer for salvation, salvation by God's Name, salvation by His strength. The Church also expresses confidence that God shall deliver her from all her enemies.

In the Collect we pray to be mindful of Christ's coming and to be stirred up to holy living.

The Epistle reminds us of the certainty of Christ's return. But He is longsuffering, for He would have all men to be saved.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on Judgment Day and the joys of heaven.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the Judgment when He shall sit upon the throne and before Him shall be gathered all people.

*

THE TWENTY -SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Introit on the last day of the Church Year is full of comfort, peace and promise. God has redeemed us. He will hear our prayer. He will deliver us from captivity and bring us to the land of Jacob (heaven).

The Collect is a prayer for forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the bonds of all evil.

In the Epistle we are reminded that Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Therefore, we must walk as children of light. God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation. We are to comfort and edify one another.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse contemplate the beautiful picture of the bride (the Church) being brought to the bridegroom (Christ).

In the Gospel Christ tells us the parable of the Ten Virgins. The bridegroom comes unexpectedly. They that are ready go with Him to the marriage.

*

SAINT ANDREW THE APOSTLE'S DAY, November 30

In the Introit we recall Christ's words to the Apostles. They will be led into all truth,

they will bear witness, and they will be persecuted. With the Apostles we sing praises to the Lord our Light and Salvation.

Remembering how St. Andrew readily followed the call of Christ, we pray in the Collect for like grace to follow this call in our heart and life.

The Epistle speaks about the necessity of faith. But faith cannot come without the Gospel and the messengers of the Gospel. St. Andrew was sent to be such a messenger.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on the spiritual qualities of the Apostles and their leadership in the Church.

The Gospel speaks about the call of St. Andrew. As he and his brother, Peter, were casting their fishing nets from the shore of the Sea of Galilee, our Lord said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This call they obeyed immediately, showing us how we must obey and follow Christ.

*

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE'S DAY, December 21

The Introit, Gradual and Alleluia Verse are the same as for St. Andrew's day.

The Epistle declares that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. It is in Christ that we have been chosen by grace to be the sons of God.

In the Gospel we hear how the risen Lord appeared to the Apostles when Thomas, who had doubted the Resurrection, was present. Here Christ gave him the evidence of His resurrection and Thomas believed. This is a picture of how we receive the evidence of our redemption in the signs of the Word, the bread, and the cup during the Church Service.

*

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL, January 25

In the Introit we give ourselves with St. Paul completely over into the hands of God, trusting that He will keep us in His grace until the last day.

The Collect is a prayer for joy in the Gospel and for zeal to spread it.

The Epistle is the account of the conversion of St. Paul.

In the Gradual we hear St. Paul speaking about the grace and power of God in his preaching of the Gospel. And in the Alleluia Verse we meditate on the commissioning of St. Paul, which reminds us of our commission.

The Gospel is our Lord's promise to the Apostles. This was fulfilled in St. Paul at his martyrdom.

*

THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD, February 2

In the Introit we stand with Simeon in the temple embracing the Lord. As we do so, we add our voices to the praise of the whole Church, extolling the Name and the lovingkindness of God.

The Collect is a prayer for pure hearts and, that as Christ was presented to us, we may be presented to Him.

In the Epistle God speaks to us by the prophet Malachi about the Lord coming suddenly to His Temple. This prophecy was fulfilled at the Presentation.

As in the Introit, so in the Gradual we chant Psalm 48. (If the Alleluia Verse is used): We meditate on our meeting Christ in the Temple in the Alleluia Verse. (If the Tract is proper): We chant the canticle of Simeon in the Tract.

The Gospel is the fulfillment of the prophecy given in the Epistle. Christ comes in the church service as the Light and Glory of the Church, but also with His real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

*

SAINT MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE'S DAY, February 24

The Introit is the same as for the Conversion of St. Paul.

The Collect is a prayer for the Church that she may be preserved from false teachers and may abide in the teachings of the true apostles.

In the Epistle we hear the account of the choice of St. Matthias to the apostleship.

The Gradual is the same as for St. Andrew's Day, except that in Lent the Alleluia

Verse is omitted and Psalm 21:2-3 may be used as a Tract. In this Tract the Church praises God for what He did in behalf of St. Matthias.

In the Gospel we see the Apostle and ourselves as the "babes" to whom the Father "revealed these things." In the church service Christ is present and invites us to "come" to Him. He is "meek and lowly of heart" and we are invited to learn of Him.

*

THE ANNUNCIATION, March 25

In the Introit our feeling is that of the Bride of Christ. The Blessed Virgin Mary is a type of the Church, the Bride of Christ. Psalm 45 is the song of the Bride.

The Collect is based on the Annunciation and prays that by the Passion of Christ we may be brought to the glory of His resurrection.

The Epistle is the prophecy of Isaiah about the virgin birth of the promised Messiah.

In the Gradual we meditate on the prophecies of the Messiah, the Immanuel. Both the Tract for Lent and the Alleluia Verse for the Easter Season pray the angel's message at the Annunciation.

In the Gospel the account of the Annunciation is proclaimed. Here is the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Epistle.

*

SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST'S DAY, April 25

In the Introit we chant God's command to the Evangelist for the writing of the book of the Gospel and the fame bestowed on His name.

The Collect is a prayer for firm faith in the Gospel of salvation and for a goodly life.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about the gift of evangelists to the Church. Christ gave this gift for the salvation of man and the upbuilding of His Body, the Church.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse chant the goodness of the Gospel of Christ, who is our King, and the blessing to the Church of the apostles and evangelists.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the sending of the seventy. We, too, have been

commissioned to bring the Gospel to our fellowmen.

*

SAINT PHILIP AND SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE'S DAY, May 1

The Introit, "They that be wise," extols the greatness of the apostles. With them we join our praise of the Lord.

The apostles learned to know Christ as the only Way to life, and we pray in the Collect that we may also know Him by a true and living faith.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about the Church as a temple built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the Corner-Stone.

In the Alleluia Verse we chant, "The Lord gave some, apostles, and some, evangelists, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

The Gospel shows us both Apostles with Christ. He speaks about His ascension and comforts them with His coming again. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. To see Him is to see the Father. In the church service Christ is present with us as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

*

THE NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, June 24

In the Introit we chant the office of St. John the Baptist, by which the glory of our Lord was revealed. For this we thank and praise God.

The testimony of St. John the Baptist about Christ is the basis of the Collect, in which we pray for comfort and joy in this witness and for steadfastness of faith.

The Epistle is Isaiah's great prophecy concerning the person and work of St. John the Baptist.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on the miraculous creation of St. John the Baptist and his office

The Gospel proclaims the birth and circumcision of St. John the Baptist and the prophetic canticle of Zacharias in which he sees already the "day-spring from on high."

SAINT PATER AND SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE'S DAY, June 29

The Introit is the same as for St. Matthias.

In the Collect we pray that we may be willing and ready to lay down our lives for Christ as did St. Peter and St. Paul.

The Epistle is the wonderful deliverance of St. Peter from prison. This shows God's care for all of us.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on the faith and hope of St. Paul and the blessings bestowed by God on the saints.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the great confession of St. Peter at Caesaria Philippi. We make this confession to Christ in the church service.

*

THE VISITATION, July 2

The Introit is the same as for the Annunciation.

In the Collect we pray for grace to receive in humility and faith the Word born of the Virgin Mary and to be made one with Him.

The Epistle is Isaiah's prophecy of the Branch which will grow out of the root of Jesse, a description of the person and work of Christ.

In the Gradual we meditate on the prophecy of the Epistle and in the Alleluia Verse we honor the Virgin Mary with the angel Gabriel and praise God for the fulfillment of His promise.

The Gospel proclaims the account of the Visitation. The blessings of the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth are ours in the church service.

*

SAINT MARY MAGDALENE'S DAY, July 22

In the Introit we recall that, by taking heed to the Word of God, we are saved from the snares of the wicked and by faith we have Christ's undefiled righteousness.

The Collect is a prayer for the benefits of Christ's redemptive work and for power to follow in His holy life.

In the Epistle God speaks to us about a virtuous woman. This description applies to St. Mary Magdalene as a Christian, to the Bride of Christ, the Church, and to us as Christians.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we see ourselves in St. Mary Magdalene and the Church, the Bride of Christ.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about the penitent woman who washed His feet with her tears. The Church applies this to St. Mary Magdalene.

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SAINT JAMES THE ELDER THE APOSTLE'S DAY, July 25

The Introit is the same as for St. Philip and St. James.

In the Collect we pray that by God's grace we may forsake all worldly and carnal affections, as did St. James.

The Epistle teaches us that they who love God are born of God and all things shall work together for their good.

The Gradual is "Their sound;" the Alleluia Verse, "I have chosen you." Here we meditate on the preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles.

Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel about the foolish request of the apostles James and John, in connection with which He foretold the martyrdom of St. James.

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SAINT BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE'S DAY, August 24

The Introit is the same as for the Conversion of St. Paul.

In the Collect the Church prays for faithful teachers to glorify God's Name.

The Epistle declares that the suffering of Christ was continued in the apostles and still is in the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are the same as for St. James the Elder.

In the Gospel our Lord admonishes the apostles not to strive for greatness, but to imitate Him in humble service. Then He promises them a place at His table and rulership in the Church.

SAINT MATTHEW THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST'S DAY, September 21

The Introit is the same as for St. Mark the Evangelist.

In the Collect we pray that we may follow Christ as did St. Matthew and leave behind all covetousness and the love of money.

The Epistle teaches us that Christ continues to be present in His church and bestows gifts and officers on the members of His Body.

The Gradual, "How beautiful," is a meditation of the beauty of the Gospel. The Alleluia Verse, "The Word of the Lord," chants the everlastingness of this Gospel.

The Gospel proclaims the call and conversion of St. Matthew. In the church service, we, too, receive our Lord's assurance that He receives sinners and that we shall eat with Him in His Kingdom.

*

SAINT MICHAEL'S AND ALL ANGELS' DAY, September 29

In the Introit we call upon all angels to join us in the praise of God. At the same time we acknowledge their superior strength and their perfect obedience to God.

The Collect is a prayer for the help and defense of the angels who are ordained for the service of God in heaven and us on earth.

In the Epistle we hear of the rebellion of Satan and his defeat by St. Michael. St. Michael is the leader of the angels who today further the salvation of men and fight against our hellish foes.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse meditate on the service of the angels and our need to join them in the unceasing praise of God.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the angels of children (children of God). How wonderfully this reveals the meaning of the angels in our lives, especially in God's plan for our salvation.

*

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST'S DAY, October 18

We begin the service by chanting God's praises in the Introit: "His Name shall endure forever. His Name shall be continued as long as the sun."

In the Collect we pray that the True Physician may heal all our diseases of the soul by the wholesome medicine of His Word.

The Epistle speaks of the good fight of faith and receiving the crown of righteousness which the Lord has laid up for us.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse, "How beautiful," we sing of the beauties which the peace of the Gospel brings. St. Luke brought us this peace in his Gospel.

The Gospel shows us our Lord sending out the seventy, which included St. Luke, to preach the "good news," saying: "The harvest is great but the laborers are few." Christ is calling us also.

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SAINT SIMON AND SAINT JUDE THE APOSTLE'S DAY, October 28

The Introit is the same as that for St. Andrew.

The Collect, "O Almighty God, who hast built Thy Church," brings out three thoughts: 1. Christ has built His Church on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets. 2. This truth is to unite us in faith, and 3. We are to be made a holy temple.

The Epistle speaks of the living hope which we have by the resurrection of Christ. By it we are kept and we rejoice in it even in suffering. Suffering is a refining process to prepare us for the final glory.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are the same as for St. Andrew.

In the Gospel Christ speaks to us about the martyrdom of the apostles. The fellowship of love which Christ demands fellowship in His suffering. Christ and the wicked world are opposites, therefore the world hates us.

*

THE FESTIVAL OF THE REFORMATION, October 31

In the Introit we chant portions of Psalm 46. The great hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," is based on this Psalm.

The Collect is a prayer for Christ's Church Militant and her children that they may remain steadfast in the truth and be defended against all enemies.

The Epistle reveals the angel having the everlasting Gospel. This represents the spread of the Gospel through the Reformation.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are from Psalm 48, another Psalm associated with the Reformation.

In the Gospel our Lord speaks to us about St. John the Baptist. Even as he was the reformer appointed by God in his day, so Martin Luther was the Gos-appointed reformer of the sixteenth century reformation.

*

ALL SAINTS' DAY, November 1

As we chant the Introit, we see in spirit the great multitude with white robes and palms of victory before the throne, singing the song of salvation to the Lamb. Psalm 33 invites us to take part in the feast of the Church. Joy fills heaven and earth.

In the Collect the Church prays that all of us may follow the example of the saints and attain with them eternal life.

The Epistle gives us a glimpse of heaven where we see the redeemed before the throne of God. All have been cleansed by the blood of Christ.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse take us back to earth. Here we exhort one another to find forgiveness in Christ and to enjoy all the blessings of God.

In the Gospel Christ describes the saints on earth in the Beatitudes. Their life is in Christ and they are nourished in the Church service through Word and Sacrament.

*

A DAY OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER

The Introit pictures the Lord upon his throne (altar) denouncing the wickedness of His people. In response we plead Psalm 30 and acknowledge our sinfulness.

In the Collect we plead the goodness and mercy of God for forgiveness, confess our sins, and pray for cleansing and renewal.

The Epistle is the same as that for Ash Wednesday.

The Gradual is a call to return to the Lord and amend our wicked lives. Then the Lord will have mercy.

The Gospel is the same as that for Ash Wednesday.

*

A DAY OF GENERAL OR SPECIAL THANKSGIVING

We appear before God and in the Introit call upon "everything that hath breath" to praise the Lord.

In the Collect we plead the mercy of God. We have not deserved His goodness. Therefore, we ask that the Holy Spirit will cause us to realize this and to be thankful.

The Epistle is an exhortation to give thanks and to pray for all sorts and conditions of men. God has had mercy on all and seeks the salvation of all through the Gospel of Christ.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we meditate on our dependence on the gracious providence of God. Let us, then, bless His holy name.

Christ tells us the parable of the Ten Lepers in the Gospel. It is wished most to receive God's blessings, to take them for granted, and to fail to thank and worship Him. Faith in Christ expresses itself primarily in the Holy Eucharist.

*

THE FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

In the Introit we acknowledge God's gracious and bountiful providence. In Zion (Church) we praise and worship Him for His blessings.

The Collect is a prayer of gratitude for God's gifts of the harvest and a plea for His blessing on the seed of the Word in our hearts, so that we shall bring forth the fruits of Faith, including our thank-offerings.

The Gradual and Alleluia Verse are the same as for A Day of General or Special

Thanksgiving.

In the Gospel Christ warns us against covetousness and tells us the parable of the Rich Fool. Earthly treasures will perish, but the heavenly treasure of the Gospel will endure forever.

*

DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

In the Introit we chant our faith in the special presence of God in His House.

The Church prays in the Collect that God may continue to dwell among us here with His Word and Sacraments.

The Epistle is a vision of the new heaven and the new earth in which our meeting in the church is a foretaste.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we praise God for granting us His presence in our Church.

In the Gospel our Lord speaks to us about the Kingdom of God, in which He comes nigh and dwells among us.

*

SYNODICAL SUNDAY

In the Introit we appear before God in His sanctuary and call upon "everything that hath breath" to praise the Lord in His greatness and for His mighty works.

The Collect centers in God's mercy. We have not deserved His goodness. May we acknowledge His mercy and give thanks.

God speaks to us in the Epistle about "giving thanks", especially for His redeeming love of all men in Christ.

In the Gradual and Alleluia Verse we bless God for His gracious providence.

Christ speaks to us in the Gospel about the one leper out of ten who "returned to give glory to God."

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