THE PRAYER BOOK AS GUIDE TO A SPIRITUAL LIFE

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Praise for *Inwardly Digest:* The Prayer Book as Guide to a Spiritual Life

Too often, *The Book of Common Prayer* is open to a few familiar pages on Sunday and closed the rest of the days, with little regard to the deep, transformative spirituality inside. With humor, deep reverence, and academic insight that is anything but dry and boring, Derek Olsen reminds us of the breath of the Spirit, the lives of the saints, the love of Jesus, and the magnificence of God held in the words, silence, and worship of our *Book of Common Prayer*. Clergy and laity should read this to discover and re-discover the daring words and liturgies of our faith spanning eons and to engage the prayers and worship of our faith

—LAURIE BROCK
Episcopal priest and author of Horses Speak of God: How
Horses Can Teach Us to Listen and be Transformed

Derek Olsen is the patron saint of the overlooked; campaign manager of the undervalued; tour guide to the taken for granted. His patient, scholarly watchfulness and his gift for rendering complex ideas in clear, concise prose make *Inwardly Digest* an insightful guide to *The Book of Common Prayer* and a sure and steady introduction to Anglican spiritual practice.

—JIM NAUGHTON Founder of Episcopal Café and partner of Canticle Communications

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CHAPTER 3

THE ANATOMY OF THE CALENDAR

year laid out in the Calendar. special days, and the lectionaries depend on the shape of the patterns. In particular, the Collects, the rites provided for material, several other parts relate back to it and assume its beginning of The Book of Common Prayer. After this initial The Calendar is most clearly laid out in a section at the

The Calendar of the Church Year

- 1. Principal Feasts (p. 15)
- 2. Sundays (p. 16)
- 3. Holy Days (pp. 16-17)
- 4. Days of Special Devotion (p. 17)

5. Days of Optional Observance (pp. 17-18)

The Titles of the Seasons, Sundays and Major Holy Days observed in this Church throughout the Year (pp. 31-33) by Month] (pp. 19-30) [List of Fixed Feasts and Days of Optional Observance

liturgical rules governing the various days of the year. These The first few pages of this Calendar section provide the

provide general rubrics for figuring out what to celebrate on a given day. Next, we have a section that lays out the months from January to December and identifies which fixed feasts fall on which days. Lastly, we have a list of titles that specify how we name the various liturgical occasions of the year.

For the most part, this section does a good job of ordering your services, but there are a few oddities worth noting that affect both how we order things and how we understand the wider Church Year.

First, the normative unit of time throughout this section is the day, and therefore seasons are given short shrift. Notice that there is no section here that describes seasons of the Church Year. That's not to say they are absent; the names of the seasons are mentioned throughout the Calendar section and they are used as structuring devices in the titles listed on pages 31-33. However, the seasons are assumed rather than explained.

Indeed, many people assume that the colors of the liturgical seasons and the practices around them are listed out somewhere. There are plenty of such lists—but none of them appear in the prayer book.

Second, the Calendar section begins with three paragraphs that discuss the movable date of Easter. The third paragraph emphasizes that "the sequence of all Sundays of the Church Year depends upon the date of Easter Day" (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 15). However, it doesn't actually tell you that there are tables later in the prayer book that help you figure out when Easter falls each year and the impact that Easter's placement has on the other feasts around the Easter season (Ash Wednesday, Ascension, Pentecost) as well as how this placement affects the First Sunday of Advent. These tables, which had formerly been joined to the Calendar rules, are now found in the back of the book:

Tables for Finding Holy Days

Tables and Rules for Finding the Date of Easter Day
Rules for Finding the Date of Easter Day (pp. 880-881)
A Table to Find Easter Day [from 1900-2089] (pp. 882-883)
A Table to Find Movable Feasts and Holy Days [based on the Day on which Easter Falls] (pp. 884-885)

to know how to properly order everything else. around Easter, and the Church's gaze must remain on Easter a practical way: So much of what the Church does is oriented sense, this table reinforces an important theological point in and the month and day of the First Sunday of Advent. In a Proper that the Sunday after Trinity Sunday will start with, table, the Table to Find Movable Feasts, and it will provide the turn the page, and look up that month and day in the next Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, and Pentecost, the Numbered number of Sundays after Epiphany, the month and days for is a straightforward list: You look up the year, and it tells you leap year or not. Once you have that information, you can the month and day on which Easter falls and whether it's a involves the Church Calendar. The Table to find Easter Day are also some nuggets that will help you with planning that the specific rules for determining the date of Easter-but there There is much in this section that seems fairly arcane—like

There is also an explanation of the funny letters and numbers listed in the monthly tables on pages 19-30. If you look at page 22—the month of April—you will see four columns going across the page. The first only appears sporadically and gives a number. This is the Golden Number related to finding Easter Day—feel free to ignore it. ⁵ The second gives the days of the month. The third is a repeating string of letters going from A to G; these are the Sunday Letters. This column can be handy if you want to know

what holy days fall on a Sunday in a particular year. By finding the letter of the current year on the table at the top of page 881, you can learn which letter will represent the Sundays throughout the year. The fourth column gives the title of the occasion with feasts in bold type and optional days in regular type.

on the Calendar is hidden within the section of the book devoted to the Collects: though. It turns out that a certain amount of useful material necessarily help you figure out what to do or pray in all cases, Friday, what do you do?6 The precedence table doesn't Or, conversely, if the Annunciation happens to fall on Good do you celebrate in church? The holy day or the Sunday? Thus, if the Presentation of Our Lord falls on a Sunday, what celebrate when Sundays and holy days overlap one another. variable one at that), precedence helps you to know what to dates every year, and since Easter is a Sunday (and a rather on March 25. But, as you know, Sundays fall on different Lord is always on February 2, and the Annunciation is always Calendar every year. For instance, the Presentation of Our days have a fixed date; they occur on the same date on the precedence. That is, it helps to identify what days are more important than other days. Most of the Church's holy Third, the focus of the Calendar section is on establishing

The Collects for the Church Year

Concerning the Proper of the Church Year (p. 158)

Collects: Traditional

[Collects for Sundays of the Church Year] (pp. 159-185)

Holy Days (pp. 185-194)

The Common of Saints [for Days of Optional Observance] (pp. 195-199)

Various Occasions (pp. 199-210)

Collects: Contemporary

[Collects for Sundays of the Church Year] (pp. 211-236) Holy Days (pp. 237-246)

The Common of Saints [for Days of Optional Observance] (pp. 246-250)

Various Occasions (pp. 251-261)

The initial section on the Proper of the Church Year gives us two important principles:

The Sunday collect is used throughout the rest of the week unless there's a holy day.

"The Collect for any Sunday or other Feast may be used at the evening service of the day before" (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 158).

Then, a variety of notes get tucked between the collects. There are three kinds of notes: 1) notes that identify when certain optional movable days occur, 2) notes that give additional directions on how to handle a tricky part of the Calendar, and 3) notes that direct you to other services within the book.

The Calendar section mentions Rogation Days and Ember Days but never explains what they are or when they fall. While the what never does get explained, the when is provided by italicized notes like the one on page 160 following the Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent: "Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of this week are the traditional winter Ember Days" (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 160).

Page 161 gives an example of the second kind of procedural note: The italics on both sides of the title for the First Sunday after Christmas provide more detailed instructions for how to negotiate the three holy days that fall after Christmas and what to do if one of them lands on a Sunday.

On page 166 after the title for Ash Wednesday, we find the third sort of note. This one directs you to a proper liturgy for the day in another part of the prayer book. Essentially, these notes are present for the major days of the redemption cycle that ground the seasons of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter that are gathered together toward the middle of the book:

Proper Liturgies for Special Days

Ash Wednesday (pp. 264-269)

Palm Sunday (pp. 270-273)

Maundy Thursday (pp. 274-275)

Good Friday (pp. 276-282)

Holy Saturday (p. 283)

The Great Vigil of Easter (pp. 285-298)

All of this sounds very confusing. This is because there is no piece dedicated to tying it all together. Allusions and references are made to a wide variety of concepts around the Calendar, but these references assume a big picture sense of the whole that the prayer book never actually provides. In order to understand what the mechanics are and how the mechanics flow into our spirituality, we need to take the time to construct the big-picture view that is implied but never stated explicitly.

THE SHAPE OF THE CALENDAR

Competing Calendar Schemes

The Calendar as we currently have it stands in the midst of three different schemes. First, we have the historical Western Calendar that has been in use since it solidified around the

seventh century. This is the structure that informs liturgical and spiritual writing up through the middle of the twentieth century. Second, we have the revision and simplification of that Calendar influenced by the Liturgical Renewal Movement and enshrined in the Roman Catholic reform of the Calendar at Vatican II in 1969. While most of the historical pattern was retained, it was reoriented; the reforms superimposed on the Calendar an idealized view of fourth-century practice that focused on Easter, Sunday, and Baptism, simplifying and sometimes suppressing features that didn't seem to work well with these emphases. Third, the Calendar of the Revised Common Lectionary has now superseded the lectionary originally printed in the prayer book, which reinforces the process of simplification and the application of modern principles to an ancient system.

The Eucharistic Lectionary that shaped the Calendar of the first prayer books was the one-year lectionary used by the English Sarum Rite. This lectionary was one of several floating around Western Christianity in the years before the Reformation and is similar in most respects to the Roman Catholic lectionary formalized at the Council of Trent—the first time that the Roman Catholic Church set forth a single uniform liturgy. (There are a few differences in readings at the beginning of the Season after Pentecost and in some other places.) This one-year lectionary that we held largely in common with the Roman Catholics and those Lutheran groups who retained lectionaries had an important influence in the formative years of the prayer book. As we will note later on, specific references to some of the lectionary readings are tucked away in our collects and hearken back to this old system. 8

The Roman Catholic council, Vatican II, was a watershed moment for the Western Church as a whole. One major change that had wide-ranging ecumenical impact was the

move away from a one-year Eucharistic Lectionary to a three-year cycle. When the 1979 prayer book was being prepared, several Protestant denominations were at work on a common lectionary based on the Roman Catholic model. The lectionary originally authorized and printed in the prayer book was a product of this process. However, it was not the endpoint.

and gaps between the prayer book and its Calendar and the of the things that we contend with are the slight differences Revised Common Lectionary and its Calendar system. different readings and a slightly different shape. Thus, one year lectionary to a different three-year lectionary with slightly result, we have moved from a one-year lectionary to a threein the prayer book with the Revised Common Lectionary. As a The Episcopal Church voted to replace the lectionary printed book's Calendar. Finally, in 2006, the General Convention of sense of the Church Year has some differences from the prayer prayer book-but not the same. Not only have some of the readings changed, but also the lectionary's ecumenically basec Content-wise, it is very similar to the earlier version put in the America and Canada, and many other Christian bodies. America, the conferences of Roman Catholic bishops of both containing members from The Episcopal Church, Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1994 by the Consultation on Common Texts, a broad body The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) was released in

Some General Principles

Broadly speaking, the emphasis on Easter, Sundays, and Baptism has certain practical effects on the Church Year. There are two major meta classes of feasts: feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ and feasts of the saints. As a general principle, feasts of our Lord take precedence over feasts of the saints. The occasions of the temporal cycle are feasts of our Lord, as are

the fixed holy days that celebrate events in the life of Jesus and his mother. Likewise, all Sundays are also feasts of our Lord.

So far, so good. As a set of general principles this works pretty well. However, there's a twist in here that never gets fully explained: In the section devoted to Sundays, three feasts of our Lord get special treatment and take precedence over a Sunday. Why these three? Well, this is the complicated part that the book doesn't explain.

Certain seasons are more protective of their Sundays than others. Basically, the Sundays within seasons that have a distinctive theological character are higher-ranking feasts of our Lord than the fixed holy days that fall within them. Here's a list of the order of precedence that may help:

- Easter Week/Holy Week
- Sundays of Easter
- Sundays of Lent
- -
- 4. Sundays of Advent
- . Holy Days: Feasts of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ
- Sundays of Christmas
- Sundays of Epiphany
- Sundays of the Season after Pentecost
- Holy Days: Feasts relating to our Lord Jesus Christ
- d. Holy Days: Feasts of the Saints

You can see what's tricky here—there's a distinction between two different sorts of feasts of our Lord that get treated differently in different seasons. Basically, nothing will ever replace a Sunday in Easter, Lent, or Advent. When it comes to Christmas, Epiphany, and the Season after Pentecost, it depends. The more important feasts (Holy Name, the Presentation, and Transfiguration) do trump the Sundays; other feasts offer you an option. If a Holy Day of either sort

What we're really fussing with here is a delightful blend of incarnation and redemption. All Sundays celebrate the Resurrection; all Sundays remind us of our redemption wrought through Christ's Resurrection. Many of our holy days are rooted in the Incarnation; they offer specific examples of what it means for us that God took on our flesh or, conversely, that Christ incarnates himself in the very flesh of those who love him and follow him in the way that the first apostles and his mother did. Yes, all Sundays and holy days have a blend of both incarnation and redemption, but the way we celebrate the various occasions can help us reflect on them as we travel through the year.

Which is better to do when a feast falls on a Sunday in a green season: celebrate the season or the holy day? That depends—I would think it is better to celebrate the specific feast of our Lord (the fixed holy day) over the general feast of our Lord (the Sunday) and to give way to the most important of the sanctoral festivals: the dual feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the feast of Saint Mary the Virgin (liturgists can debate whether it should properly be classed as a sanctoral feast or a feast of our Lord), and the feast of Saint Michael and All Angels.

While we are speaking about general principles, I'll note that the fourth section discussed in the Calendar identifies a different kind of day from the others. Sections one through three and section five (Principal Feasts, Sundays, Holy Days, Days of Optional Observance) are about precedence: What feast gets celebrated should a conflict arise. Section four fusses with a completely different issue. Rather than being concerned about what to observe, it focuses on how to observe. This

section gives us ascetical directions. And they are fairly simple—fasting (eating less food than usual) or abstinence (refraining from a kind of food, usually four-footed flesh meat and poultry) are proper on Fridays that aren't celebrations.

You might ask what this is doing here if it doesn't seem to relate to the topic at hand. It does, in that it balances the importance of Sundays and the fullness of the faith. If we celebrate every Sunday as a festival of the Resurrection—as we should—we also need to keep Fridays as a reminder of the crucifixion. While Sunday should always receive the higher acclaim and the greater focus, we risk falling into danger if we celebrate a resurrection disconnected from a crucifixion, a liturgical theology of glory without a corresponding theology of the cross.

Advent

Advent focuses on one chief affection: watchful expectation. But, as the monastic reformer Saint Bernard expounded in one of his sermons for the season, we explore it in three different directions:

We know that there are three comings [advents] of the Lord. The third lies between the other two. It is invisible, while the other two are visible. In the first coming he was seen on earth, dwelling among men...In the final coming all flesh will see the salvation of our God, and they will look on him whom they pierced. The intermediate coming is a hidden one; in it only the elect see the Lord within themselves, and they are saved. In the first coming our Lord came in our flesh and in our weakness; in this middle coming he comes in spirit and power; in the final coming he will be seen in glory and majesty (Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo 5, In Adventu Domini).

first sense, seeing it as the time in which God's people waited season to both begin and end the Church Year. Taking the voice is sounding" (59), Philipp Nicolai's "Sleepers, wake!" many of the classic hymns of Advent reflect this perspective: particularly connected Advent with the second coming; and highly influential author at the end of the sixth century, the season for a long time. Gregory the Great, reforming pope the Church's Year. This third sense was the dominant sense of Lord and Judge, Advent serves as the perfect conclusion to indeed, of this present age itself with the coming of Christ as the third sense, seeing it as the culmination of the year and, the perfect time of preparation for Christmas. Taking it in for the birth of the long-promised Messiah, Advent serves as us to balance this perspective with a hearty dose of Christian appearance of the Judge, some of these hymn texts remind are familiar with the "Dies Irae" ("O Day of Wrath") 64) and Laurentius Laurenti's "Rejoice! Rejoice, believers" Charles Wesley's "Lo! He comes, with clouds descending" parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids to remind us that hope. Both Laurenti and Nicolai use with good effect the Gregory's homilies focus on the dread associated with the was originally composed as a sequence for Advent. While from requiems may be surprised to learn that this text (68) to name but a few in our hymnal. Music lovers who (61; 62), the old Latin "O heavenly Word, eternal light" (63; (The Hymnal 1982, 57; 58), the old Latin "Hark! A thrilling feast of the Lamb, not just to judgment. the coming of the Lord is our summoning to the marriage The multiple senses of Advent allow it to be the perfect

Some modern authors have attempted to downplay Advent as a penitential season and have suggested that rejoicing at the coming of the Bridegroom is a more fitting attitude. They would also like us to see Advent as a pre-baptismal period, another forty-day stretch of catechesis leading to initiation

at the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord on the Sunday after Epiphany. While the elements of rejoicing shouldn't be suppressed, Advent does ask us if we stand ready for the coming of the full presence of God. For myself, I find this question to be the most fruitful. When I consider the Baptismal Covenant in light of the Advent proclamation that a holy God comes to dwell with a holy people, I inevitably find myself falling short. I turn to penitence, less because the season is an inherently penitential one and more because of the realities that the season lays bare. If you are fine with the Four Last Things: Heaven, Hell, Death, and Judgment—the traditional themes for preaching during the season—then, no, it doesn't have to be a penitential season at all. As for me, I'm not quite there yet!

Even as we consider Bernard's third aspect of the season, though, it is also tempered by the second coming that he mentions. During this season we focus on our own watchful expectation for Christ to be born within us. The coming of the Lord does not have to be as dramatic as the entrance on the clouds in Wesley's hymn; the affection of the season seeks to cultivate in us an inward watchfulness, spurring us to get our house in order for the coming King. Philip Doddridge's "Hark! The glad sound!" (The Hymnal 1982, 71, 72) neatly captures this second aspect, focusing on the inward experience of Advent.

The final weeks of the Season after Pentecost begin ramping up the theme of the Last Judgment flowing into the first few weeks of Advent. The shift to the Nativity is heightened by the beginning of the "O" antiphons on December 17; while they don't appear in the prayer book per se, they are explicitly broken out in Hymn 56, indicating which verse should be used at Evening Prayer with the Song of Mary on each day.

the Holy Innocents.) Saint Stephen, the 28th honors Saint John, and the 29th honors celebrated as the First Sunday after Christmas, the 27th honors instance, if Sunday falls on the day after Christmas, the 26th is that day and any successive day are pushed back by one. (For that if a Sunday happens to fall on any of the latter three days, the Holy Innocents. A note in the collects section establishes Christmas Day, Saint Stephen, Saint John the Evangelist, and any one of which could be a Sunday in any given year: gymnastics because there are four fixed holy days in a row, season is one of the most complicated in terms of rubrical that, very early on, became associated with Christmas. This the season is tempered a bit by the character of the holy days the mystery of Immanuel: God with us. Yet, the rejoicing of season of rejoicing that focuses on the Incarnation and on December 25, and runs up to the eve of Epiphany. It is a Sundays are included! The season begins on Christmas Day, least half of them are prayer book feasts—if the two possible The Christmas season lasts a spare twelve days, but at

These holy days have been attached to Christmas for a very long time; they tend to put some perspective on the joy of Christmas. Saint Stephen is referred to as the *protomartyr*—the first of the martyrs. He is the first of Christ's followers to suffer death because of the faith, and the story is consciously told to mirror the death of Christ himself. Saint Stephen's death is recorded in Acts 7. Parallel to Jesus, Stephen commends his soul to God and forgives his persecutors—the young Paul among them. Historically, the liturgies of the Church have focused on two aspects of the feast of Stephen. First, like Jesus, Stephen's prayer at his death is effective: Paul is himself converted, and this conversion is greatly attributed to Stephen's prayer. Second, both prayers and hymns catalogue

a number of antitheses or dramatic and ironic reversals between the Nativity and the death of Stephen: Christ was born to the world, but Stephen died to the world; Christ conferred life, Stephen endured death; Christ descended to humanity, Stephen ascended; Christ came to earth, Stephen went to heaven, etc. The underlying reminder here is that while Christ came to share the life of God with the world, the way to share most deeply in the life of God is none other than the way of the cross.

Next, we celebrate Saint John, apostle and evangelist. The only apostle not to suffer a martyr's death, the connection between John and Christmas comes preeminently through the famous opening of his Gospel—which has been read at the third Eucharist of Christmas ever since we have records of such readings. No other Gospel account captures quite so effectively the sense of incarnation as John's Prologue (John 1:1-18), and the high point of that passage is verse 14: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

The third holy day is the feast of the Holy Innocents, which, like Stephen, gives Christmas a darker turn. While it commemorates an event from Matthew's Gospel (2:16-18), its inclusion in this cluster of feasts around the Nativity itself underscores that we know the full story: Innocence is no guarantee of safety, and the innocent Lord of Life—himself an infant at this point—will in his own turn be condemned to die.

The next feast of Christmas is more benign even if it celebrates an occasion that may seem an odd liturgical moment: the feast of the Holy Name. This is a feast of the person of our Lord and, as such, should be celebrated even if a Sunday falls on this day. It's also our first octave day of the year. Under the pre-Reformation systems, certain important feasts would be celebrated for a whole week afterward—

within a people, affirming and confirming his Jewish identity. God's covenant with the children of Abraham, locating him person in a specific culture. Circumcision brought him into scandal of particularity-that Jesus was born as a specific to the fact of the Incarnation: It explicitly reminds us of the biblical event, this feast reminds us of an important corollary a biblical event: the circumcision of Jesus, which, as with "Circumcision of our Lord." More than just recording a the more delicate "Holy Name" rather than former books' included the naming rite. Our current prayer book prefers recorded in Luke 2:21. The ceremony of circumcision also any good Jewish lad, occurred a week after his birth as addition to being the octave of Christmas, it also celebrates Christmas itself. What's interesting about this day is that, in 25—seven days after, but eight if you begin counting with one of them. Thus, January 1 falls the week after December liturgically, if not otherwise—and Christmas was certainly

upon, even in the face of a variety of potential explanations body and matter, And yet this is what the Church insisted that spirit was better than and fundamentally opposed to both crazy talk to the dominant Neoplatonic perspective that said matter-fallible, corruptible, imperfect, decaying matter-was God, a divine spirit-being, would stoop to sully himself with worked wonders, even the Resurrection. But the idea that a a God who loved them. People could get behind a God who Christianity in its first few centuries. People could embrace the Incarnation was one of the greatest stumbling blocks of special affinity with Incarnation. Indeed, the statement of and has been-argued that Anglicanism in particular has a celebrations rather than church. Nevertheless, it is one of the most important doctrines of the faith, and it can betime that is often given over to travel, family, and holiday because the season dedicated to it is so brief and falls at a The doctrine of the Incarnation sometimes gets short shrift

of how spirit and matter stayed appropriately separate in the person of Jesus. Instead, the Church chose, and defended, and fought for Incarnation: the belief that God cares about us enough to become one of us. This is the miracle of Christmas: God took on humanity so that we might take on divinity. This, in and of itself, totally apart from crucifixion, totally apart from resurrection, is a fundamental act of God reconciling humanity and all creation to himself. Of course, crucifixion and resurrection are also part of the equation but take on greater and deeper meaning for the fact of the Incarnation. They mean more when we acknowledge that it was a truly human Jesus who suffered, died, and was raised than if it was a spiritual projection that only seemed to suffer.

:piphany

One of the principles observed and standardized in the mid-to-late twentieth-century Calendar reforms is the notion that seasons tend to begin and end with feasts. As a result, it is often said that the feast of Epiphany concludes the Christmas season. In one sense, this is true—in another it is not. On one hand, if you count out the famous "Twelve Days of Christmas" by modern reckoning, they will end on January 6, the Epiphany. On the other, if you count them out following the standard classical method (counting the day you start with), the twelve day period ends on January 5. According to the prayer book's list of feasts (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 31), Epiphany is the first entry under the Epiphany Season while the Second Sunday after Christmas day closes out Christmas proper.

Whether there is such a thing as the Epiphany Season is a point of some debate. According to the prayer book, there is an Epiphany Season; according to the Roman Catholic reform of the Calendar, Christmas runs through the Sunday

ourselves in the odd situation of keeping the season yet losing adoption of the Revised Common Lectionary, we find Roman Catholic removal of the season. With the Episcopal with the Third Sunday and thus functionally siding with the sequence after the Second Sunday after Epiphany, beginning title, Season of Epiphany, yet breaks into an Ordinary Time designated as Sundays after Epiphany, The Revised Common after the Epiphany and everything after that is Ordinary Time Lectionary attempts to split the difference; it retains the

and some of the earliest teachings of Jesus. These were all cycled through the first miracles in each of the Gospels to the world. understood as different ways that Christ made himself known of Jesus and how he was shown to be both fully human and fully divine. As a result, the Gospel readings of the period whole was about how God was made manifest in the person divinity of Christ was revealed to the world. The season as a here is that the Epiphany season focused on the ways that the Theophany, which means manifestation of God. The point medieval calendars retained the Greek name of the feast, manifestations or showings-forth. Actually, many of the epiphanies. Epiphany comes from the Greek word meaning The original point of the season is that it was about

What's the point? So, why does the issue about a season of Epiphany matter?

the preparatory season of Advent, then the festal season of incarnation, the other celebrates redemption. The first includes there are two cycles in the temporal sequence: one celebrates place it into neat classifications. According to these schemes, reforms and the Revised Common Lectionary that follow over-simplification of our Calendar. The Roman Catholic them attempt to make the Church Year more tidy; they Perhaps it illustrates the ways in which we accept an

> and resurrection—as central and important as these are. and that redemption includes more than simply crucifixion redemptive moments possible through his incarnate nature recognizes that the earthly ministry of Jesus contained one another. Retaining an independent Epiphany season through which these two interact with and interpenetrate is packaged into these two boxes, we lose shades of meaning it feels just a little bit too tidy. If God's work of reconciliation these is relegated to "Ordinary." I resist this, though, because Christmas; the second includes the preparatory season of Lent, then the festal season of Easter. Everything outside of

Lectionary, its status and title is unclear. 10 the feast without the name—the Gospel reading was of the Now, with the official adoption of the Revised Common was simply referred to as The Last Sunday after the Epiphany. Transfiguration and the collect mentioned it, but the day itself August 6. The prayer book's original solution was to offer it by turning it into Ordinary Time. Furthermore, the prayer book already contains a feast of the Transfiguration on the meaning of the season after having functionally gutted hindsight, it seems ironic to create a new feast to underscore manifestations of Jesus' two natures in the Gospels, In sense if the theme of the Epiphany season is manifestation The Transfiguration is, indeed, one of the more dramatic end liturgical seasons, the Revised Common Lectionary Transfiguration Sunday. This actually makes quite a bit of created a feast to conclude the Season of Epiphany, that is, accordance with the concept that feasts should begin and There's one more oddity that ought to be mentioned. In

of which have been used as hymns since the early medieval long poem on the life of Christ in the fifth century, sections and incarnate redemption. Caelius Sedulius wrote a very couple of hymns helpfully lift up the themes of revelation When we turn to The Hymnal 1982 during Epiphany, a

period. One of these is "When Christ's appearing was made known" (131, 132), which does a great job of connecting the various manifestations celebrated liturgically in the early part of the Epiphany season. Both Martin Luther's "When Jesus went to Jordan's stream" (139) and the nineteenth-century "I come,' the great Redeemer cries" (116) emphasize the redemptive power of Christ's incarnate ministry. Finally, "Songs of thankfulness and praise" (135) unites the idea of manifestation along with the redemptive acts of the Incarnate Christ, making it, in my mind, one of the very best vehicles for communicating the heart of the Epiphany season.

Lent

The season of Lent engages the affection of penitence. During Lent we consider ourselves from two vantage points. The first concerns the human tendency to sin—individually and corporately. Sin is a reality of human existence. The other unavoidable reality of human existence provides the second vantage point: death. Lent opens with Ash Wednesday's stark acknowledgement of the reality of death. Lent isn't about being morbid or punitive, tearing ourselves down, or whipping ourselves into a lather of self-condemnation. It is, rather, about reality. It is about taking honest stock of who and what we are in the face of eternity and in the face of God. We are limited; we are fallible. In our short lives, we make choices that lead us deeper into separation and chaos—cutting ourselves off from those who love us and whom we would love. Lent is a deliberate exercise in owning up.

The Ash Wednesday liturgy has four particular parts that focus our attentions at the start of the season. The first is the exhortation to a holy Lent. It sets forth briefly the idea of Lent, noting its dual role as a season for baptismal preparation and a season for corporate repentance. After

the history lesson, it points us to the particular disciplines of the season and identifies elements of a holy Lent: "by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 265). Thus, we confront the reality of our inner lives, we do things that help us love God and neighbor, and we re-center ourselves on the vision that God has for the world and our place within it."

The second component of the Ash Wednesday service is the imposition of the ashes. This is a liturgical moment of great power—and should be allowed to speak for itself without piling up a bunch of words around it. Some of my most poignant and important memories of Lent are from this part of this service. I remember my first Ash Wednesday as a parent when I carried my infant daughter to the rail and saw the priest put the ashes on her forehead. The contrast, the paradox, between her youth and the mark of mortality affected me deeply. Some may think this inappropriate, but I recall the many churchyards I have wandered, looking at gravestones and seeing markers for children (and often their mothers). The reality of mortality offends our sensibilities but to deny it plays into our fantasics.

Alternatively, I remember one year when I assisted in the chancel, imposing ashes. As I moved around the altar rail, I found myself facing three figures—in the center was an elder of the congregation, his eyes closed, face to the sky, arms outstretched, gripping the hands of his wife on one side, his best friend on the other. For the previous nine months, I had been visiting him weekly as he wrestled with an aggressive cancer that had turned terminal. We all knew this Ash Wednesday would be his last. For him, this moment was a solemn embrace of sister Death in the company of the Church, the whole Body of Christ gathered around him.

Here, though, lies one of the brutal truths of Ash Wednesday: This man from my congregation was not closer to death than anyone else in the room. All of us are but a breath, a heartbeat, a moment away from death. The difference between us was his awareness of his situation. He knew and chose to face the truth of his mortality, a truth about which most of us would prefer to remain blissfully unaware.

From this point in the service we move to the third component, Psalm 51, the greatest of the penitential psalms. In these words, we are given an example of full disclosure before God. The psalmist is under no illusions about his interior state; there is an honesty here that we may find uncomfortable but which speaks directly to the presence, reality, and power of sin in our lives. I think the prayer book purposefully gives us this psalm at the beginning of the season. We receive it as a model of penitent prayer. We may not feel every bit of what the psalmist says, but it gives us direction and guidance for the deep self-examination to which we are called. And, as we pray it and gaze within ourselves, we may indeed find ourselves drawing closer to the psalmist's perspective than we might have first thought.

The fourth part is the Litany of Penitence, which also spurs us to self-reflection. Its beginning mirrors Jesus' summary of the law that classically began Anglican Eucharists, including the Rite I Eucharist in our current prayer book. It still starts the Penitential Order that is especially appropriate in this season (the Rite I version is p. 319; Rite II, p. 351). Jesus encapsulates God's Law in Mark's Gospel in this way:

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord your God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is

no commandment greater than these" Mark 12-19-31 (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 351).

By putting this section of scripture at the beginning of Holy Eucharist, the architects of the early prayer books gave this passage a special place in our understanding of what God requires of us and what righteousness looks like: loving God, loving neighbor. This is us as God wants us to be.

The Litany of Penitence starts out with a frank acknowledgement that we are in clear and deliberate contrast:

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, Lord (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 267).

sin, repent and return to the Lord?" (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 304). you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into us of that second question of the Baptismal Covenant: "Will us to be. It gently recalls us to that high vocation, reminding us with the reality that we fail to be the people God created but honesty about who and what we are. The litany confronts offered further examples of failures to love in which we may done this. Having set out the main thesis up front, we are find ourselves. Again, the purpose here is not self-flagellation identifies and helps us recognize concrete ways that we have to love-in thought, word, and deed-we have departed from definition of sin. Sin is the failure to love. When we have failed because we have come from traditions that seemed to God's intention for us and for creation. The rest of the litany overemphasize it. But the prayer book lays out clearly the A lot of us are uncomfortable talking about sin, sometimes

created us and loves us (no matter what!). recollecting ourselves-who we are in the face of the God who more toward the habitual recollection of God, we are also run than attempts at greater feats of penitence. As we move they are actually fairly easy-but are more useful in the long attendance at Eucharist. These are not great ascetic works--practices of the faith-including the praying of the Office and that Lent is a perfect time to recommit ourselves to the regular such as this, I would be remiss if I did not offer the reminder the assistance to live our Baptism like we mean it. In a work communities and to pray for the strength, the courage, and world to see. Lent is our time to look into ourselves and our And we need to live that grace and love for the rest of the fallible, and mortal. We need God's grace. We need God's love. sober, honest opportunity to look at ourselves as we are: frail, the rest of the season. It is not a period of punishment but a In these ways, Ash Wednesday sets the proper tone for

catechumenal process, the principle of grading was rejected, to realign the Lenten experience with the fourth-century idealized fourth-century baptismal practices. In the move process did not fit within the twentieth-century emphasis on moved us deeper into Lent and its exercises. However, this off Holy Week. So, there were a series of four grades that higher two weeks before Easter. Finally, Palm Sunday kicked the First Sunday of Lent. Then Passiontide moved the bar liturgy of the ashes. The Lenten liturgical round started on week Pre-Lenten period. Then Ash Wednesday hit with the on the Sunday ten weeks out from Easter, creating a three season progressed. The season began with Septuagesima easy, then, at designated points, ramped things up as the movement into practices of penitence. That is, it started off look at the historic Calendar is that it saw Lent as a graded century reforms, Lent was changed the most. The best way to Of all the seasons that were altered in the twentieth-

and the Lenten experience was reduced to a period of forty days beginning with Ash Wednesday. The pre-Lenten season was trimmed away; Passion Sunday was merged with Palm Sunday to make Holy Week even more distinct. The Revised Common Lectionary does not recognize Holy Week as a distinct season—it is the final week of Lent. The prayer book, however, does give Holy Week its own heading equal with Lent so we will consider it separately although recognizing its intrinsic Lenten character.

facet of the season that, all too often, is lacking. traditional richness of the season to make room for another often left on the table. We have trimmed away some of the to have fallen behind our liturgies. The potential is all too communal celebration during Easter, our evangelism seems and provides resources for a return to adult baptism and its within an Episcopal Church. While the prayer book envisions On the other hand, I have never seen this process take place experience to share the Lenten journey with those preparing college chaplaincy (I sang in their choir). It was a moving for Baptism, and it did give that Lent a deeper character. once—and that was in the context of a Roman Catholic Lord's Prayer. I have only experienced a catechetical Lent can also be used); on the Fifth Sunday, they are given the they are given the Apostles' Creed (though the Nicene Creed candidates for Baptism are enrolled; on the Third Sunday, baptized at the Easter Vigil. On the First Sunday in Lent, the Pastoral Services, a set of liturgies is provided for those to be contained in The Book of Occasional Services, Within the Lent is not entirely clear without the catechumenal liturgies The intention of the twentieth-century renovation of

On a practical liturgical note, the Lenten liturgies receive a more austere tone. The *Gloria in exclesis* is not sung; alleluia is not said. ¹² If a Hallelujah does appear in a psalm, the word can simply be omitted. Penitential options are provided for the

opening of the Eucharist and as the invitatory antiphons at Morning Prayer. Sundays are always feast days (which is why we speak of Sundays *in* Lent rather than Sundays *of* Lent), but it's appropriate that the rejoicing be a bit more subdued. (And, of course, on Sundays you may—within moderation—indulge in those things that you have given up for Lent.)

The veiling of images, statues, icons, and crosses is common, but different authorities give different times as to when this should be done. Some suggest that it is done on the First Sunday in Lent; others suggest Passion Sunday. Of course, with the transference of Passion Sunday to Palm Sunday, a decision must be made whether Passiontide is retained as a two-week period or, following the prayer book, is reduced to Holy Week itself.

(151)—but also model corporate confession for social sin like paraphrase of Psalm 130 in "From deepest woe I cry to thee" in "Wilt thou forgive that sin" (140, 141) or Martin Luther's hymns come in individual forms—like John Donne's prayer the hymns that model penitential prayer. The introspective this, occupying a place between the more didactic hymns and George Smyttan's "Forty days and forty nights" (150) do the Great's "Kind Maker of the world" (152) as well as themes and directions that our penitence should take. Gregory Some hymns call us to penitence, frequently by suggesting the company of saints and to follow their good examples. the Old and New Testament, inviting us to see ourselves in the fasting, penitence, and prayer of central figures from both these forty days" (143), unites our Lenten experience with point of the season. The Latin Office hymn, "The glory of with the fast of Jesus in the wilderness and neatly frames the (The Hymnal 1982, 142) connects the Lenten experience Claudia Hernaman's "Lord, who throughout these forty days" introspective. Some teach the Church's theology of the season. The hymns of Lent range from the informative to the

David Hughes's "Creator of the earth and skies" (148). Last, it's worth noting that even in the Lenten hymnody, the goal toward which the season moves is not overlooked. Classic Office hymns like "Lord Jesus, Sun of Righteousness" (144) and Percy Dearmer's "Now quit your care and anxious fear" (145) alike point us toward love and Easter as the true end of the Lenten experience.

Holy Week

Holy Week constitutes the space of our deepest yearly meditation on the passion of Christ and ushers in the three great days that are the highlight of the Church Year. It is also in the space of a single week, and, if a family follows typical American churchgoing habits, they could miss all but one day (Palm/Passion Sunday) or even the whole season altogether! It can be said without exaggeration that this is the season where faithful attendance at—or at least attention to—the public liturgies of the Church matters the most and renders the most. Both the prayer book and the Revised Common Lectionary provide material for every day of the week, with the Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday receiving their own distinct liturgies in the block between pages 270 and 285 of the prayer book.

Palm Sunday was conflated with Passion Sunday in the mid-twentieth century by the Roman Catholic Church; this move worked toward the process of leveling the grades of Lent, but also recognized through the title what was actually going on in the service. That is, Passion Sunday didn't have a passion reading—Palm Sunday did. Indeed, there was little in the liturgy of Passion Sunday to signal a further shift toward the cross and passion than other Lenten Sundays: neither the Gospel (John 8:46-59) nor the other propers seemed more passional than normal. By contrast, the celebration of Palm

Sunday had included the reading of the entirety of Matthew's Passion (chapters 26-27) from at least the seventh century.

For most Episcopalians, this change makes no difference—the 1928 prayer book was the first American or English book to identify the Fifth Sunday in Lent as "Passion Sunday," and it directed no liturgical changes at the time. Only those who followed old traditions or Roman Catholic customs of the timing for veiling images and crosses, dropping the *Gloria Patri* from the end of the psalms, and singing different hymns at the Office noticed, and they had to decide whether to keep doing it following the Fifth Sunday in Lent or whether to shift these practices to Holy Week.

read from the Gospel of John. This offers us the same basic at the end of the week. story, yet two different perspectives, one on Sunday, the other or Luke). Then, during the last days of Holy Week, we always story from the Gospel appointed for the year (Matthew, Mark Passion part of the Palm Sunday service, we hear the passion the logic of the three-year lectionary cycle is leveraged: at the isn't just repeating the same stuff we just heard? This is where them. How do we work this so that the rest of Holy Week the Passion reading—even if they miss the full experience of it to Holy Week services, we make sure that they at least hear the Palm part. Second, in case the congregation doesn't make to get Jesus into Jerusalem for the last week of his life. This is get confused. Two things are happening here. First, we have two Gospels. Throw in a procession as well, and it's easy to isn't like this. There are three collects and a blessing-and a bit odd. After all, we are used to a Sunday orienting itself around one Gospel and focusing on one theme. Palm Sunday The combination of Palm and Passion Sunday may feel

Out of the Palm Sunday material, my favorite part is the very first collect of the service. It sets the whole tone for the rest of the week to come:

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.¹³

There you have it: "the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality." That's the perfect introduction for all that follows.

The days of Holy Week have been prayer book service days since the very first prayer book. It used to be that the passions from the four Gospels were read through the week: Most of Matthew's passion was read on Palm Sunday. Monday and Tuesday recounted Mark's passion, Wednesday and Thursday read through Luke's passion, and John's passion was read on Friday. Saturday finished off the end of Matthew's passion with the burial of Jesus. Our current Holy Week service moves in a chronological direction rather than a comprehensive one: The Passion Gospel of Passion Sunday comes from the Gospel appointed for the year, the days of Holy Week read from John's narrative beginning at chapter 12, which begins "Six days before the Passover..." The Daily Office Lectionary of Year One also prescribes similar but not identical readings from John 12 for Monday through Wednesday.

Holy Week is fundamentally about the journey to the cross. We accompany Jesus, his apostles, and the disciples on the last walk into Jerusalem and through the days that follow. The services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil are best seen as a single liturgical unit with long pauses between its movements. For me, I can't help but hear strains of Renaissance settings of the Book of Lamentations floating

all through Holy Week—as Lamentations was the heart of the Daily Office services and some amazing settings were composed for *Tenebrae*, the Office of Shadows that occurred in the early mornings at Matins and Lauds. We can take our cue from them: Holy Week has a restrained grandeur in order to communicate the horror of human hatred that we unleashed upon the Lord of Life.

imaginative construction. have identified what I believe to be a fundamental flaw in their time working with and reading through these devotions, I imaginative-affectional spirituality. However, as I have spent Sarum England, just before the Reformation, emphasize this emotional people, many of the passion devotions from late And, while we may not normally think of the English as African-American experience stands strongly in this tradition. "Were you there?" (The Hymnal 1982, 172) from the For instance, I suggest that the African-American spiritual, bring upon us. Certain traditions are better at this than others. then to feel the emotions that witnessing these things would to imagine exactly what we would have seen and heard, and hymns, and prayers to give ourselves the sense of being there, devotion. In these sorts of devotions, we use images, readings, the Cross—come from the imaginative-affectional tradition of of the greatest devotions of the Passion—like the Stations of where we find ourselves within the events of the passion. Some consider our perspective: how we interpret these moments and Recognizing that, it's important to take a moment and

These materials tend to identify heavily with the disciples and with the women who accompanied Mary. That is, we have images or texts that describe vignettes with graphic depictions of what is suffered by both Jesus and Mary in the events of the capture, judgment, torment, crucifixion, and death. The *Fifteen Oes* of Saint Brigit are a classic example of this as is the medieval hymn "At the cross her

vigil keeping" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 159). The problem is that the identification of us is consistently and relentlessly with the disciples. We gain a clear sense of us and them. We are those who follow Jesus; they are those who slay Jesus. The devotions themselves, with this stark contrast, lead us to experience the crucifixion of Jesus not as humanity's inhumanity to the Son of Man but as the experience of what the Jews did to Jesus. Given the emphases of these devotions, it's no surprise that medieval and renaissance pogroms sometimes coincided with Palm Sunday and Good Friday. This Christian anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism is absolutely deplorable and has no place in our faith.

rather than condemnations of "the Jews." the Good Friday Reproaches properly as words directed at us both crowds. It is only with this perspective that we can hear "Crucify him!" We need to be able to locate ourselves within that shouted "Hosanna" was the same crowd that shouted is muted if we fail to make the connection that the crowd the disciples and as the crucifiers. The impact of Palm Sunday materials lack: "Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon is in the hymn, "Ah, holy Jesus" (The Hymnal 1982, 158). sometimes to excess. A good example of the proper reversal thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee. 'Twas I, Lord The second verse in particular makes the turn that the Sarum Reformation Roman Catholic spirituality, this point is made, the fact that we are them. This is not a new insight. Indeed, lesus, I it was denied thee: I crucified thee." We stand both as in the period of the Reformation and in a lot of Counterthe Church and the scripture on sin if we fail to account for season and its liturgies. We misconstrue the basic teachings of of scripture and undermining a proper understanding of the perspective on Holy Week, missing one of the big patterns This kind of devotion creates and fosters an us-and-them preaching true love. most religious. Holy Week warns us of the consequences of and pride—particularly among those who saw themselves as that was not afraid to speak openly against sin, hypocrisy, deeply uncomfortable, that challenged the status quo, and He preached a love—and enacted a love—that made people his death. That is not the love that Christ preached incarnate to preach love. Had the content of love been some feel-good message of self-satisfaction, no one would have demanded the nature of love and the consequences of love. Christ came Friday are about a life patterned by love and therefore about something more meaningful. Maundy Thursday and Good we as lovers of Christ mean something more significant, word love is used for in American culture these days! Surely love is a very broad word. Consider all of the things that the incarnate and therefore the most perfect exemplar of love. But project. We say that God is love. We say that Jesus is God patterns lie at the heart of this whole liturgical spiritual not on Sunday and fall outside the usual pattern. However, Thursday and Good Friday services. I realize these services are It is a shame that more people don't come to the Maundy

away, of all supports, defenses, and shields. Jesus could have servant in the midst of his friends. The stripping of the altar portrays in symbolic terms the stripping away, the falling strong enough in humility to perform the role of a menial symbols and pregnant words reveal a host of deep meanings example of what this love and service looks like. The Last The washing of the feet offers a vision of a leader who is Supper is an intimate gathering of friends, yet its elemental actions of the evening offer a powerful—and disturbing-another as Christ has loved us. All three of the great liturgical the day gets its name—is the Gospel exhortation to love one humble service. The maundy—the commandment from which Maundy Thursday lays bare the strength and power of

> one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). the last word: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down run. But he didn't. Therefore it is only fitting that we give John

and power. absence of a consecration a meal that proclaims his presence from the cross. We receive from the reserved Sacrament in the collects to the One who did not respond to his own son's cry effective instrument of torture. We address a long series of form or another. We lift high and venerate a very simple yet destroyed. Most of our acts this day involve paradox in one the conviction that in his dying, the power of death will be the day that mortals slay the immortal, the day the Lord of Life gives himself up to death. And we call it good, firm in Good Friday is our great festival of paradox: We celebrate

head into Easter. Week for as the sun sets, we prepare to turn the corner and Church is a shell without Jesus. It is the last service of Holy Prayers of the People. It is a shell of a gathering—as the There is no Eucharist; there are no greetings; there are no is basically a collect, the readings, a homily, and an anthem. marking time—an experience of liturgical waiting. We gather a single page of the prayer book (p. 283). It is a service of that speaks volumes here is all of the things left undone: It together and then—we don't really do a whole lot. The thing service for it. It is a simple Service of the Word that occupies fewer still appear for Holy Saturday, and yet we have a If not many make it to Maundy Thursday or Good Friday,

The Easter Season

together in full flower in the splendor of a well-celebrated Easter Vigil. The dual emphases on Baptism and Easter come Iturgical Renewal Movement is the restoration of the Perhaps the greatest achievement of the twentieth-century

of the Church on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection. ending with Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth Ascension of Christ forty days after the Resurrection and the Alleluia-laden "Christ our Passover" (Pascha Nostrum). comes the next morning as Morning Prayer kicks off with follows Gospel chronology effortlessly, celebrating the bodily Likely the oldest season of the Church year, the Easter Season ongoing power of the Resurrection. Another related thrill Days as the Church celebrates the coming of Easter and the year. The Vigil sets the tone for the rest of the Great Fifty of a long Lent is one of the most spiritual moments of my lit Paschal candle in the midst of a darkened nave at the end Easter Vigil. Hearing the singing of the Exultet before a newly

within its span, they are transferred out to the days after the no other feasts are allowed to fall within this week. If special readings assigned for Eucharist and the Office, and special octave; every day is a prayer book holy day with March 25 (the Annunciation) or a feast of the apostles falls Resurrection to the Second Sunday of Easter, is another The first week after Easter, from the Sunday of the

the triumph of life, the ultimate sign that love is stronger of those you love. It takes its cue from the Resurrection, of resting in the presence of God, and in being in the presence deeper, richer than that. This is simply the joy of living, the joy teeling or attempting to put on a happy face. It is more subtle, expression—it is a pattern of being. It is not about feigning a As I said of the affections earlier, this is not an emotion or an Resurrection and acquaint ourselves with the affection of joy Easter is the season when we meditate on Christ's

"Alleluias!" There are a number of places where alleluias Part of the celebration for the prayer book is to add

> Eucharist's dismissal the fraction anthem at the Eucharist and also at the are properly added in during the Easter season, notably at

and rejoicing are the hallmark of the season's praises. "The Lamb's high banquet called to share" (202). Jubilation ye faithful, raise the strain" (199, 200), and the Office hymn Red Sea brought at last" (187), John of Damascus's "Come, Moses and the Lamb" (181), Ronald Knox's "Through the including William Hammond's "Awake and sing the song of pervades the Easter Vigil is celebrated in many Easter hymns crossing of the Red Sea with the Resurrection of Jesus that (The Hymnal 1982, 179) and "Hail thee, festival day!" (175). with the return of spring in "Welcome, happy morning!" The theological link between the Exodus from Egypt and the The hymns of Venantius Fortunatus connect the Resurrection The hymns of Easter likewise add alleluias throughout.

(kneeling and prostrations), Contemporary accounts continue regular and consistent part throughout the rest of the year of its practice during Easter (standing) and ignore the more entirely unlike ours. Thus, it seems odd to impose one part prostrations was the regular rule. It was a liturgical culture and throughout the Easter season. However, it comes from a liturgical environment where kneeling and multiple of Nicaea-the church council in 325 CE that agreed on canon from that council prohibits kneeling on Sundays the wording of what would become the Nicene Creed. A kneeling is sometimes connected to a canon from the Council during Easter for the same reason. This prohibition of omit the Confession of Sin during the Sundays of Easter. 14 Likewise, in some churches, it is the custom not to kneel Some churches also exercise the permission to occasionally during Easter because of the celebratory nature of the season The Church does not follow its usual pattern of fasting

to show differences of practice from one region to another; whatever uniformity the council was attempting to impose, it did not achieve.

The Season after Pentecost

The Season after Pentecost is referred to in some Calendars as Ordinary Time. This is not intended to suggest that it is ordinary in the sense of being normal and not important, but rather that the Sundays are counted in an ordinal fashion (i.e., first, second, third). Unfortunately, this fine distinction is often easily and quickly lost. This is the long, green season that occupies somewhere between twenty-three and twenty-eight weeks out of the year, depending on when Easter falls. As far as I'm concerned, it is most closely connected with the affection of faithful endurance.

the Monday after Pentecost. The problem is that the collect comes at the very start. The season after Pentecost begins or for the week is typically that of the preceding Sunday—but readings showing up in the summer and fall. The difficulty moving Easter season. Thus, we can always count on the same Propers to calendar days minimizes the effects of a constantly the Daily Office Lectionary). The logic is that the fixing of Pentecost either in the collects, the Eucharistic Lectionary, or calendar date. Thus, an ordinary Sunday like Proper 15 will (and we can find this out by looking through the Season after be whatever Sunday falls closest to the date of August 17 reference to a numbered Proper that is anchored around a However, the collect and the readings are established by page 32 of the prayer book shows, as Sundays after Pentecost. Office. Sundays in this period are counted, as the table on particularly for those who are diligent in their use of the Daily The beginning of this season can be a little tricky

not in this case. Instead, we locate the Proper that falls closest to the date of Pentecost, use its collect, and begin lectionary readings from this point. The first Sunday of the season itself is the Feast of the Holy Trinity, one of our principal feasts. The week following the feast continues with the collect of the Sunday that would have been and continues the lectionary readings in course. Thus, due to the placement of Pentecost and the Feast of the Holy Trinity, the two earliest possible Propers—Proper 1 and Proper 2—will never actually be celebrated on a Sunday, although their collects and weekday readings may be used when Easter falls at its earliest dates.

saints' days in their time, and there's no need to create a Anglican fathers had to rescue Sundays from encroaching Resurrection can be subverted and obscured. The early it can be a hard habit to break, and the weekly feast of the strong to create cause Sundays. But once the practice starts, appointed texts? Three reasons: First, the temptation can be to devote a Sunday to a special cause rather than using the long. How could it hurt to transfer a feast now and then or to shake things up a little bit as the green Sundays wear "urgent and sufficient reason." 15 There can be a temptation Anything else requires the bishop's permission, as well as the Feast of All Saints because of its status as a principal feast. permissible during the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Easter. The only other feast that may be transferred to a Sunday is be enshrined in the church). And even those transfers are not is named for) or its patron (i.e., any saints whose relics might to fall on a Sunday. Note, however, that it is not proper to the feast of the parish's title (i.e., the saint or mystery that it move a feast that falls in the week onto a Sunday unless it is celebrate a holy day in place of the Sunday if it should happen hold the lowest order of precedence, and it is permissible to As noted above, the Sundays of the Season after Pentecost

of time. If someone is changing these on a whim, though, it with others. Third, there is a discipline in following the cycle. makes light of the commitment to read and pray in common church or anybody else's church that follows the system. You can read, mark, and inwardly digest the readings ahead can know what the readings will be next Sunday at your prayer. One of the beauties of a lectionary system is that you feasts or cause Sundays interferes with the notion of common similar situation now with causes. Second, transferring the

celebrate the reign of Christ. title but has taken the concept: The collect and the readings the end of Epiphany—the prayer book has not adopted the Pentecost as the Feast of Christ the King. Again—as with at the end of its Season of Epiphany, the Lectionary and the Roman Catholic Calendar appoint the final Sunday after Revised Common Lectionary placed Transfiguration Sunday "Proper 29, the Sunday closest to November 23." Just as the the prayer book, "The Last Sunday after Pentecost," and is The Last Sunday after Pentecost is officially titled in

The Days of Optional Observance

277 ferial days in a regular year. that is a total of eighty-eight prayer book feast days, leaving (as three are principal feasts), and the thirty-two holy days, you add together the seven principal feasts, forty-nine Sundays the Days of Optional Observance. These are the ferial days or ferias, which means any day that isn't a Sunday or a feast. If Days of Special Devotion, only one category of days is left: Beyond the Principal Feasts, Sundays, Holy Days, and the

set of people to be celebrated as lesser feasts on these days. rubrics and the list of titles of feasts gives us a potential The monthly listing of days between the Calendar

> many or as few as you would like. this: They are all optional. You can choose to celebrate as some of these falling on Sundays in any given year, it doesn't names brought forward; as you can see, even accounting for 115 recommended lesser feasts on the list; the latest set of leave a lot of open days. The thing to remember, though, is One of the issues over the latest list is the sheer volume of recommendations from 2015 offers 288 potential occasions. When lesser feasts were first introduced in 1963, there were

provides a range of possible options. Here are six of them: Eucharist is being celebrated on a ferial day, the prayer book is whether you choose to change the Collect of the Day. If a Optional Observance don't impact it much—the only impact Because of the cyclical nature of the Daily Office, Days of

- To celebrate a major feast that has fallen elsewhere in the week as provided in the prayer book.
- To celebrate a lesser feast as a Day of Optional Observance appointed in the Church's Calendar.
- To celebrate a lesser feast as a Day of Optional by using the Commons of Saints. Observance not appointed in the Church's Calendar
- 4 To celebrate the season by using the propers of the preceding Sunday.
- S To celebrate the season by using the propers appointed for a day in the given week of the season.
- To celebrate an occasion provided for in the propers for Various Occasions.

concerns of the local community. The option always exists schedule and engage with the particular charisms and where more freedom is offered to depart from a fixed weekly feasts of the Resurrection. Weekdays are the place In the prayer book system, Sundays are, for the most part,

to celebrate whatever season the Church happens to be moving through. But these days can be opportunities to celebrate saints, whether local or universal or to lift up a particular doctrine or intention through the use of the Propers for Various Occasions.

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THE LITURGICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

The Church Year establishes fundamental organizing principles that direct our common liturgical life. The Daily Office and the Eucharist both exist within and are guided by it. When we look back to the liturgies of the medieval period, quite a lot of material used to mark the liturgical year and its passage. Remember, before the mid-twentieth century and the reforms of Vatican II, there was no three-year cycle—only a one-year cycle that repeated in an unchanging fashion. In medieval books—taking those of tenth-century England as an example—each Sunday Eucharist had its own particular set of liturgically proper materials: four prayers (the opening collect, a prayer over the gifts at the offertory, a proper preface, and a post-communion prayer), two readings (an Epistle and a Gospel), and four or five minor propers (usually one or two-line biblical texts sung by the choir at the entrance, after the