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UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN - EDITORTHE SPIRIT OF ADVENT

In the liturgy of the Church, Advent is the penitential season. There is no required fasting as in Lent, but the purple of Advent is coupled with the penitential figure of St. John the Baptist, "The voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight His paths, Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rough ways smooth; and all mankind shall see the salvation of God.'" (Luke 3:4-6)

Today it's an uphill battle for Catholics and sincere Christians to enter into the traditional penitential spirit of Advent because the commercial world sentimentally anticipates the joy of Christmas to make Advent the year's biggest buying season. Parties, which formerly characterized the season following Christmas, are now the spirit of preparation for Christmas.

If Christmas is to retain its true meaning of Christ's coming mystically to us, our preparation must be a spiritual one, and in the spirit of the Church, a penitential one. The tone of Advent is set in the Epistle for the first Sunday of Advent: "Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 13:12-14)

The spirit of Advent, therefore, demands that we check the pursuit of worldly pleasures; that we do something to remind the appetites that they are still under the domination of the will. These penances become most efficacious when offered to God as part of ourselves in the Offertory of the daily Sacrifice of the Mass.

A PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT

for your

ParentsA NOVENA

of

Masses and Communions

From Dec. 5 to Dec. 13

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A Novena of Masses will be said for the parents of the students who make the Novena of Masses and Communions themselves.

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Special Novena Christmas cards will be available by December 7.

EXPERIMENTS IN ENLIGHTENED SEX The lightness of touch normally characteristic of Mary McCarthy in her writings is noticeably absent from large sections of her latest novel, The Group* To compensate for that, she lays on sex with a heavy hand. The human body, in other words, she treats here as a kind of animated garbage-disposal-unit -- and no reader will finish this book without having a pretty exact idea of how that unit works, both in the case of the very young and in that of their slightly more mature elders.

On page 334, one of the eight members of "the group" (all of Vassar), observes that her fellow alumnae are not reproducing their kind, the average-family child-production rate being 2.2. This seems hardly a matter for regret, if one may judge from the alumnae-specimens offered for our considerations in these pages. Take "Kay", for instance, who is a kind of unofficial leader of the group. She is the first to get married, as well as the first to get divorced. She is also the first to commit suicide. She jumps from a twentieth floor window, bouncing off a ledge on the thirteenth, fortunately, and landing in an awning, so that actually she isn't smashed up very much. Only her poor neck has been snapped.

"Lakey" might be taken as another example. She returns from a trip abroad, obviously a Lesbian, her companion being called "The Baroness." Lakey, probably, like Kay, had been "amazingly altered" by a course in Animal Behavior taught at Vassar by a Miss Washburn, who left her brain in her will to Science.

Animal behavior, at any rate,

is pretty much the normal thing among these Misses: including premarital experiment and scientific choice of mate. Scientific choice provides one of the girls with a soul-companion who is a Communist sympathizer, and who is also spending \$25 a week going to a psychoanalyst. This same scientific choice provides another with a whole lapful of hardware in the form of Mrs. Sanger's tampons, wishbones, silk rings, and coiled springs. And so on, and so on, for some 400 pages.

There was once a time in the modern world when we indulged in great dreams concerning higher education. Our modern civilization was ushered in on a wave of boundless optimism with regard to what our higher institutions of learning would accomplish for us. We assumed, for example, that as a result of the refinements of education, human beings would be elevated far above mere animality, that man's lower impulses would be completely sublimated by the Intellect. The validity of all that reasoning seems somewhat impaired now that the experiment has been carried out and the evidence is in.

Ortega y Gasset tells us that what really matters in life is that human beings take into account that which tran-

*Hacourt, Brace and World, 1963, \$5.95.

scends them. What really matters, he says, is that we live, "not wantonly, but warily," aware, that is, of the existence of a transcendental reality in this world. What is wrong with the exacerbated females in this novel is that they do live without the consciousness of any transcendental reality whatsoever. The result is a series of life-encounters, all taking place in what might be called the rarefied atmosphere of the pigsty.

FIRST FRIDAY OF DECEMBER

Friday of this week is the First Friday of December. According to custom, there will be Adoration in the Lady Chapel during the afternoon. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after the 11:30 Mass, and the adoration period concludes with consecration to the Sacred Heart and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 4:45.

THE BURDEN OF THE NEW-ADAM APPROACH TO LIFE -- I am convinced that what the nation needs desperately is a renewed sense of Western tradition, really a sense that we are involved in a living, evolving civilization. We need an awareness of continuity with the past, an abiding affirmation of the humanistic and philosophic values learned so painfully through the long centuries of our common experience. This is no plea for a self-conscious, capital C conservatism, which strikes me essentially phony, but for a greater sense of history. Not long ago, at a meeting sponsored by the Center For the Study of Democratic Institutions, Father William F. Lynch attacked the New-Adam approach to America, the notion that we are a perpetually innocent people, untouched and unsullied by the past, who have to begin each day anew and approach all our problems as if we were the first men who ever walked the earth. Father Lynch said that to expect men to approach every challenge de novo was to put too much of a burden on human nature. Someone else said not long ago that the trouble with liberals is that they are always being surprised. This constant surprise may be almost as debilitating for the nation as the conservatives' besetting vice of being perennially shocked. I take it that Father Lynch, by putting in a word for history, was urging us to avoid both surprise and shock.....

It may be that the tendency in American life for every new generation to play Robinson Crusoe has had the very opposite effect of what might be expected. We may be so busy greeting each day's development as if it were absolutely new that paradoxically we are becoming an extremely stand-pat, status quo society. For we seem blissfully content to keep making the same old mistakes over and over.....

--John Cogley in the Bulletin for the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions (March, 1963). (Mr. Cogley, now associated with the Center, was formerly executive editor of The Commonweal.)

IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Deceased -- Father James McElhone, C.S.C.; grandmother of Francis La Nasa of Badin; grandfather of Dan Kulak, Off-Campus. Ill -- father of Paul Joubert of Badin; Lawrence Noak; father of Don Early of Walsh.

ADVENT: A TIME OF COMING



Santa Claus dolls in store windows, multi-colored lights strung above city streets, and Advent. Clear signs for the coming of Christmas vacation. Vaguely, we are also aware that Advent begins a new mood in the Church's liturgy.

To profit from this change in liturgical mood, we must: 1) understand it, and 2) apply it. Central both to understanding and to application is the awareness that the word "advent" refers to the coming of the Lord. He comes to us in three ways.

Advent re-lives Christ's coming in history: CHRIST CAME: we take it for granted. The Jewish people hungered for the birth of the Savior: we re-live their longing by reading their Old Testament narratives in Advent Masses. So Advent helps us renew our appreciation of Christ's factual coming and our awareness of our need for redemption.

Advent looks forward to Christ's coming in judgment and majesty at the end of time: CHRIST WILL COME: we ignore it. We, in youthful vigor, find sufficiency in this world and in our ability to improve it: many of Advent's Mass texts speak of an end to this world and of the final triumphal judgment of Christ. So Advent helps us re-evaluate our interests and goals in the light of ultimate standards.

Advent achieves in us Christ's present coming through grace: CHRIST COMES: we avoid it. We stifle ourselves with fascinations of the moment and pampering of self: Advent's mood calls for repentance and encourages us to open ourselves to the spirit of Christ and show Christian love to our neighbors. So Advent unites us more closely to Christ and our fellow Christians.

Through understanding and applying the implications of this three-fold coming of Christ, we can profit a good deal from our change to the liturgical mood of Advent. The liturgy would not have us dream away the present and live only in the past or future: it is concerned with bringing us divine life now. Our prayer during Advent is that the "Thy Kingdom come!" of the Our Father becomes meaningful. We pray that the Gospel of Christ spreads throughout the world, and that it penetrates deeper into our lives, our spirit, our loves, our attitudes, and so into our society, our university, our hall, our group.

Penance and joy, hard work and expectancy: Advent. To what extent do you want the spirit of Christ to come into your life during this Advent?

--Father Lengermann