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Preface

Celebrating Christ's Victory is the companion volume to ALG 5, *Celebrating Christ's Appearing*, and completes our survey of the liturgical year, again with particular emphasis on the material in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*. It should be read in conjunction with ALG 5, particularly Chapter 1 in that volume, a general introduction to the whole year, its calendar, liturgical colours and processions; and Chapter 7 in ALG 5, which deals with daily prayer and initiation throughout the year, although we have added to this in more detail in the present volume where we have thought it necessary. This present guide covers the period from the beginning of Lent through Holy Week and Easter to Trinity, but also includes some comment on the Trinity to All Saints period, including Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi. All Saints itself is dealt with in ALG 5. In the final chapter we make brief comment on the material in *Times and Seasons* for 'Seasons and festivals of the agricultural year'. We have placed most emphasis on the major liturgies, as *Times and Seasons* itself does. As ever, we are enormously grateful for the assistance we have received from colleagues, students and friends, and hope that these two latest volumes will be of service.

B.G-T.
S.M.J.

1

Lent

And now we give you thanks
because you give us the spirit of discipline,
that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace,
as we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery
with mind and heart renewed.

(Short preface for Lent, TS: p. 218)

Liturgical character

Whereas Advent has preparation as its primary focus, of which penitence is nevertheless a proper part, Lent has penitence as its chief purpose, yet with preparation for baptism or the renewal of baptismal vows at Easter as key positive components by ancient tradition. There is a certain gravity to Lent that Advent lacks, and yet there is also a thread of joy and expectation without which Lent would not be adequately or most profitably observed. This said, it is a season with its own unique liturgical obligations and opportunities. The cross is emphatically present from the very beginning of the season, the impact of which ought quite properly to be significant in its relative suddenness. In years where Candlemas occurs only a matter of days before Ash Wednesday, this hinge point in the liturgical year will be especially apparent; where there is a longer period of Ordinary Time before Lent, care must be taken not to allow the shadow of the cross which falls across the Presentation of Christ in the Temple to be obscured, while at the same time not giving it a liturgical emphasis which is inappropriately anticipatory of Ash Wednesday. The collects and lectionary for this part of Ordinary Time help ensure that the balance is maintained, and careful liturgical preaching will also assist.

The meaning of the title 'Lent' being 'spring' (albeit indirectly – strictly from *lencten*, thus referring to the lengthening of days in

spring), it must not be forgotten that there is a dimension of celebration about the season as well as of what might sound like a more sober 'observance'. George Herbert could write, 'Welcome deare feast of Lent', and it is indeed a positive time of repentance and renewal; the vision is to the cross and beyond, to the hope of new life signalled by the resurrection that each Lenten Sunday celebrates. Accordingly the liturgy needs to take this into account.

The church and the sanctuary in Lent

The visual impact of the beginning of Lent is critical, and care needs to be taken with the appearance of the interior of the church building and the sanctuary area. TS follows the line established in ASB that 'hangings' are to be removed. This can be interpreted at least as the (temporary) taking down of colourful banners. Where a church possesses a permanent set of depictions of the Stations of the Cross, in Lent especially these ought not to be overpowered visually by other, moveable items or images, and where possible attention should be paid to their accessibility for the purposes of devotion during the season, ideally ensuring a processional way around them. Hangings and other textiles which are normally the colour of the season must of course be either removed or changed. Purple or violet is the colour of Lent in many churches (and see below for the use of rose colour on the Fourth Sunday), but in view of the need to underline the distinction between Advent and Lent and to give the season its proper integrity, as TS comments, 'this should be different from the imperial purple used for Advent' (TS: p. 222). This is less of a concern where, for example, blue is used in Advent. Indeed, ancient English custom is followed in many places in Lent by avoiding any shade of purple altogether and instead using 'Lent array', usually made of unbleached linen, and often simply decorated with embroidered images of the instruments of the passion. The impact of this is very powerful.

Careful consideration needs to be given to music in Lent. The use of the organ ought on the whole to be subdued, but need not be omitted altogether, except perhaps on Ash Wednesday.

It is again customary not to place floral arrangements in church during Lent, following the logic of the removal of hangings and the need for simplicity. TS suggests dry flowers may be used. Whatever is

decided, the sanctuary and altar ought to be free of any flowers. Where, outside Lent, an altar normally has two candles at one end and a floral arrangement at the other, in Lent the flowers may be replaced by a suitable crucifix, or the candles placed at each end.

The calendar in Lent

During Lent the observance of the season takes precedence over all but one or two festivals and the principal feast of the Annunciation which themselves, it can be argued, ought to be celebrated with a degree of restraint. Nothing may displace a Sunday in Lent (nor a Sunday in Eastertide, q.v.). Care should be taken when using the CW calendar to decide which lesser festivals or commemorations will be observed, and the balance ought to tip in favour of the enhancement of the season. This said, there are feasts of saints which only ever fall in Lent, so an informed decision needs to be made in the context of the overall celebration of Lent. It may be, for example, that the life or writings of a particular holy man or woman have a character or content germane to the Lenten context. On weekdays at the Eucharist the readings should normally be those for Lent, even where there is a lesser festival or commemoration, which may be marked by a proper collect. Even then, there is something to be said for using the Lenten Collect exclusively, and observing the saint by inclusion or allusion in the intercessions.

Where a festival falls in Lent, it may not be observed on a Sunday in Lent, but is transferred to the nearest available weekday, which may not, however, be in Holy Week or Easter Week, in which case the festival must be transferred to the nearest free weekday in the second week of the Easter season. The aim is to preserve the integrity of the Sundays of the seasons and the days of Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter Week without interruption (see TS: pp. 24–30).

The Eucharist in Lent

The celebration of the Eucharist in Lent, for which TS provides the usual directory of seasonal material (pp. 212–20), needs to be characterized by simplicity and solemnity, without excluding the fact that, as always, in the Lenten season the Church gives thanks for and celebrates in a mystery the death and resurrection of Christ. On