

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGICAL CUSTOMARY OF THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT

THE people of the Church of the Advent have always been united by our common faith in Jesus Christ and by the splendor of the liturgy and music that accompanies the celebration of His presence among us in the Eucharist. The parish was founded in 1844 by people whom God inspired to worship in the catholic tradition of the Episcopal Church. Since that time, the Advent has been a witness to the Church at large by demonstrating that devotion in action is evangelical and lived faith brings grace to those in need. Many thousands of people have worshipped at the Church of the Advent, and remark on the sense of reverence and devotion that they feel here. The people of the Advent are in touch with their roots historically, from the apostolic period through the primitive church, from the Medieval period through the Reformation, and of course through the Oxford Movement of the 19th century. But we are aware of the present as well. We acknowledge that liturgy evolves. We take full advantage of the liturgical scholarship that brought about the Second Vatican Council and revision of the Book of Common Prayer. We are not a museum and do not merely recreate the past. We are a community of the Body of Christ and we seek to bring our best always to God in the liturgy. We work hard together to make our worship a faithful expression of who we are and share that with others. It has been a long journey and will continue until Our Lord brings us into the fullness of His everlasting kingdom. Our call to pray together week after week has sustained us through many long years of hardship because we, as catholic Christians, know that our first duty lies in giving praise and thanks to God and returning each week to receive His presence in the Eucharist.

These notes are the latest in a series of customaries that have been in use at the Advent for many years. They are meant to describe the liturgy as it is currently celebrated in this place at this time. They give direction to the clergy and masters of ceremonies that conduct the rites. They allow new clergy and servers to learn how to take their place in the worship of the church. They provide specific information to the Altar Guild, Acolyte Guild, Flower-Arranging Guild, sextons, musicians, and office staff. They make it possible for all involved in executing the liturgy to perform their specific functions and still worship God. When we all know what is expected of us, we can focus on being the Body of Christ and not a theatre company. If those at the altar go about their duties with a sense of grace, the congregation will not be distracted either by awkwardness or a sense of military precision. For the congregation has work to do as well. They are not the audience; they are performers also. God is the object of our efforts, the focus of all our attention. We, of course, enjoy the glorious music and beautiful flowers and vestments. The mystery of the Incarnation means that we live in a material world and thankfully enjoy the things that God has given us. But we know that even without the splendor, we would continue to give our best in praise and thanksgiving, singing with joy to

Liturgical Customary of the Church of the Advent, Boston

Our Lord and breaking bread and asking His help and forgiveness. *“For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.”*

Many people have offered themselves through the liturgy of the Church of the Advent, but three in particular are the inspiration for this edition of the Customary: Fr. Andrew C. Mead, 14th rector of this parish, whose palpable sense of devotion helped us all take God seriously and not ourselves; Nancy C. Nickolds, retired warden of the Acolyte Guild, who first encouraged the comprehensive codification of these notes; and Fr. John Clarke, former sacristan at the church, who always desired to make the liturgy reverent and yet fun, and is the original author of many of the notes in this volume.

May God continue to bless our ministry and may we always serve him faithfully as he commands us.

William J. Theisen
Julianne E. Turé
September 8, 1999
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the same Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

N.B. “This document is property of the Parish of the Advent, Boston, MA. Permission is granted to reproduce this material provided that the authors are acknowledged and a copy of the reproduction is supplied to the Parish of the Advent.”