

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Homiletics

Book Review

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ARCHIVES

HOMILETICS

INTRODUCTION

The first two Gospels of this series of outlines must have been in the mind of S. J. Forrest when he wrote two of the poems in *What's the Use?* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1960, by permission.)

NEVER RIGHT

"The parsons' heads are in the clouds!
There really is a dearth
Of sermons that are practical
And bring us down to earth.
They prate about theology
And dull dogmatic stuff,
With mystical embellishments
And other-worldly bluff.
They rave about the Love of God
To us who toil and labour;
*Why can't they give some good advice
On how to love your neighbour?"*

A vicar, hearing this complaint,
Which touched him on the raw,
Dilated on the second great
Commandment of the Law.
He spoke of Christian fellowship,
And social equity;
Of justice and of brotherhood,
And selfless charity.
But still his people criticized
(He found it very odd.)
*"Why can't he take the Good Old Book,
And preach the Love of God?"*

And the second is like unto it.

NO FARTHER

Aliquis:

I cannot call you "Father,"
Because I'm C. of E.,
With such un-English customs
I strongly disagree.
I can't forget a precept
That I was taught from birth:
"Call nobody your father,"
The Bible says, "on earth."

Presbyter:

"And be ye not called masters,"
The text announces too;
So, do not call me "Mister,"
Which also is taboo.
Such narrow exegesis
Will, one day, drive you mad;
If "Father" is forbidden,
What do you call your Dad?

Aliquis:

I cannot call you "Father,"
It strongly smacks of Rome;
But I have found a title
Which brings us nearer home.
I think I'll call you "Padre,"
As normally is done
Throughout our British forces,
Approved by everyone.

Presbyter:

But still you call me "Father,"
Which "Padre" signifies;
Your quaint circumlocution
Deserves a special prize.
For "Padre" is Italian,
And papal, through and through;
So, why use foreign language
When English words will do?

Aliquis:

I cannot call you "Father"
 In spite of what you say;
 No argument will move me
 Although you talk all day.
 Yet I have found a label
 With which I can concur,
 And with your kind permission,
 I'm going to call you "Sir."

Presbyter:

Of course, you're only leaping
 From frying pan to fire,
 Your "Sir" is *also* "Father,"
 For "Sir" is really "sire";
 So, how you will address me,
 I'm sure I do not know;
 But, as my name is Joseph,
 You'd better call me Joe.

It has been said somewhere that every preacher ought to preach one sermon a year that is far above the heads of the congregation, just to prove that he can. In the course of a year there ought to be at least one introduction to the homiletics section too that refuses to be tested on the scale of pertinence. Even at that, this one reveals that we have arrived at the end of the church year and what is needed is not so much another introduction to the present homiletic material, but an indication as to the plans for next year's issue of this journal.

We will attempt to develop the revision of the Historic Pericopes which was undertaken as an interim project by the lectionary committee working under the Liturgical Texts Committee of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. The introduction made by that committee and the lists of the lections follow. When this series has been completed, we anticipate that the new proposal for a 3-year cycle by the ILCW will be available and *CTM* will follow the suggestion of that commission that the series be tested in the following 3 years.

Trinity 22 — Oct. 29, 1972

THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Roman Ordo	The Standard Lessons
Ex. 22:21-27	Deut. 7:9-11
1 Thess. 1:5c-10	Phil. 1:3-11
Matt. 22:34-40	Matt. 18:23-35

The preacher who has worked with the standard lessons and the historic propers over the years will find himself juggling more sections of Scripture than he can conveniently keep air-borne when he undertakes preaching on the Ordo Gospel in the service for the Twenty-second Sunday After Trinity. He is accustomed to the appearance of Matt. 22:34-46 on the Eighteenth Sunday After Trinity. He has repeatedly wrestled with unifying the account of how our Lord's enemies tried to trip Him up on the question of the greatest commandment with the following account in which Jesus takes the offensive and argues that the Messiah is both the Son of David and David's Lord. On this Sunday only the first half of that pericope appears, and the task is to see it in relationship to

two new lessons in the Ordo and the three standard lessons within which our approach in this column would set it as a preaching text. At the same time he must attempt to separate it from the lessons of the Eighteenth Sunday with which he has formerly associated it. In Thierry Maertens' and Jean Frisque's *Guide for the Christian Assembly* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967) which considers the longer Gospel in the old Roman series for the Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost the comment is made that there is but a slight connection between the two incidents in the Matthew account, and that St. Luke did not hesitate to break the connection. He uses the story about the greatest commandment (reversing the roles and having Jesus put the question to the scribe) as an introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan and leaves the discussion about the origin of the Messiah in among the controversial issues. The authors conclude: "What Luke has not joined together we may not fear to put assunder." And since that is what has already been done for us in the Ordo selection for this day, it

is simplest to consider exactly what the Sunday will set before us.

The Matt. 18 Gospel urges us to cultivate the Christian talent for forgiving the brother, 70 times seven times, by the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. The Philippians Epistle records Paul's thankful prayer for the "partnership in the Gospel" which he shared with those Christians, and his petition "that your love may abound more and more . . . filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ." The Deuteronomy Lesson reminds Israel that their God is "the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments . . . and requites to their face those who hate Him." And the injunction is quite parallel to the preaching text: "You shall therefore be careful to do the commandments, and the statutes, and the ordinances . . ."

Meanwhile, back at the Introit and the Gradual, the propers supply strong psalm verses stressing the forgiveness that is ours from God, the healing for the broken in heart. The Gradual then helpfully takes the thought of our forgiveness and turns it again to our living forgivingly: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

All of this coordinating meditation underscores how important it is that the worshipers be helped before the service to make the parts of the service that precede the sermon become a part of *their* liturgy. They can be alerted before the invocation to know that the service thrust, spearheaded by the sermon, will urge them to appropriate the Gospel to increase in the talent of "forgiving living." They can then both acknowledge their need for being forgiven and appropriate God's forgiveness as the Introit is chanted. They can think through the demand of God in the Old Testament Lesson, and set it into its frame of "partnership in the Gospel" and "partakers in grace" as they hear the Epistle.

Finally in the reading of the Gospel, they can both hear the demand to forgive the brother and accept the forgiveness that "out of pity" the Lord has given to us unmerciful servants. When all this has been done, then the sermon can begin:

Partnership in the Gospel

The love of our neighbor, this text argues, is the same as our love for God, and both loves are our projection of God's primary love for us. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Our love for our neighbor, then, is not to be a matter of mere imitation, a copy of a model outside of ourselves. We are to love our neighbor with the same love by which we have been loved by God. We have had a personal experience of God's love. "We project that love, that same love, on other people. The love of God and our neighbor is one undifferentiated love, and not merely the juxtaposition of two commandments." (Maertens)

- I. The partnership of the first part — we are partakers of His grace.
 - A. Jesus Christ makes clear the unbroken unity of the whole love for God and the whole love for men. This is the sum and center of all the Law and the Prophets.
 - B. Jesus Christ lives out this love through His dying and on into His rising to new life that we may be partakers of God's grace.
- II. The partnership of the second part — our love abounds more and more.
 - A. God is love, and He not only "loved" us in His Son but Himself as love dwells in us through the Spirit.
 - B. That common indwelling love creates the "good and pleasant" unity of the brethren.
 - C. Since our love is God's it must extend itself to all the world that God loves.

Trinity 23—Nov. 5, 1972

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Roman Ordo The Standard Lessons

Mal. 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10 Is. 32:1-8

1 Thess. 2:7-9, 13 Phil. 3:17-21

Matt. 23:1-12 Matt. 22:15-22

When Nathan told his tale of the one little ewe lamb to David (2 Sam. 12) "David's anger was greatly kindled" and he said, "The man who has done this deserves to die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." When we hear the Matt. 23 Gospel, we can first feel a reaction of judgment against the scribes and the Pharisees, even though we can sense the overstatement in the story. It is an endorsement of the dogmatics of those synagog preachers quite beyond our Lord's own practice in other circumstances. In addition, many of these teachers did what they taught quite consistently. Not all of them, certainly, were as bad as they are here pictured.

After Nathan's "You are the man," and his specific charge, "By this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord," David confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord." We should confess where we have sinned in not practicing what we have been taught, and earnestly pray the Collect, "Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord. . . ."

Nathan then said, "The Lord also has put away your sin," but David yet fasted and wept for his son who was to die; but after the servants told him the child was dead, he washed and anointed himself, went into the house of the Lord and worshiped, and took up his life's tasks again. We do well to take heart as we hear the absolution in the Introit's words of Jeremiah, for we ought remember that our old self has died in the waters of Baptism. And we ought to undertake Isaiah's assignment, "He who is noble devises noble things, and by noble things he stands." We

should accept St. Paul's exhortation, "Brethren, join in imitating me," and our Lord's command, "Give God what is God's."

Such a direct application to our own style of living is indicated in the text itself. It seems clear that St. Matthew or the church who passed his letter along already began the homiletic application of this saying of Jesus. The audience who first heard Jesus speak might have been able to understand "you are all brethren" as a reference to their chosen status as the people of God; but the words "one is your teacher" which surely refers to Jesus, would not have been said meaningfully to the crowds at that time. The words, "You have one master, the Christ," again referring to Jesus, would later be clear and obvious to the church but is not the reticence typical of Jesus' self-identification and would probably not have been understood correctly at the time of this incident by the crowds. Verses 8 and 10 then have begun what the sermon today should continue. (Cf. Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965)

The fact that One is our Father, that same One is our Teacher, and that One again is our Master, underscores how we ought to "Give God What Is God's."

- I. Give it because you are children of God.
- II. Give it because you are brothers of His Son.
- III. Give it because you are servants of His Christ.

Trinity 24—Nov. 12, 1972

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY
OF THE YEAR

Roman Ordo

Wisdom of Sol. 6:12-16

1 Thess. 4:13-18 or 13-14

Matt. 25:1-13

The Standard Lessons

Is. 51:9-16

Col. 1:9-14

Matt. 9:18-26

The old Roman use supplied Collects, Epistles, and Gospels from the Sundays after Epiphany that were passed over that year whenever it was necessary to move beyond 23 Sundays after Trinity. The Lutheran Liturgy provides propers for 27 Sundays. Here, certainly, the new Roman Ordo serves the waning accents of the church year more successfully than the Standard Gospel with the Lord's warning, "Watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour." A case can be made for the Ordo's practice of following through with Epistles from one book of the Scriptures, but here the Standard Epistle with its prayer that we be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" is a most helpful combination with the new Gospel. Its connection with the Collect's, "Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people" remains useful. The Wisdom of Sol. selection would connect with the wise virgins, but the Is. 51 passage sings, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" — and if the faithful are alerted to the thrust of the new Gospel before the service begins, they can make much of that.

We Can't Sleep for Joy

- I. It is obvious we ought to be watchful.
 - A. Not because the signs are any more obvious than they have been in each generation.
 - B. But because the Lord who is long-suffering has not recalled His warning. (Matt. 24:33-35, 44, 50-51)
- II. But our watching should be in the joy that is set before us.

A. Not because of the fact that the door will some time be shut.

B. But because the Bridegroom who is coming is He whom we have learned to love because He first loved us.

GEORGE W. HOYER

Trinity 25—Nov. 19, 1972

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY
OF THE YEAR

Roman Ordo

Prov. 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

1 Thess. 5:1-6

Matt. 25:14-30 or 14-15, 19-20

The Standard Lessons

Is. 49:12-17

1 Thess. 4:13-18

Matt. 24:15-28

The Ordo Epistle takes us to the end time and warns us lest the Day of the Lord come on us unawares. In the Ordo Old Testament Lesson and Gospel, we hear of the activity of God's people as they serve Him before His final coming.

The emphasis in the Standard Lessons is also on the reaction of the faithful to the certain judgment. The judgment will not be only a time of terror. Since we will indeed receive, and have already received, God's mercy in Christ Jesus, the Epistle offers us the comfort of a resurrection and fellowship with our Lord for now and for eternity. The Gospel for today will not permit a pigeonholing of thoughts about the judgment. We cannot set them aside as abstract religious ideas. We must recognize that the Day of Judgment may actually be upon us at any moment. Just as circling scavenger eagles are a sure sign that a body is nearby, so the present sacrilege and suffering are signs of Christ's impending return in judgment.

When Matt. 25:14-30 is used as a preaching text, it gives us directives as to how we ought to live as we see the warning signs of

the judgment. We see ourselves as the lazy servant; but we still have time before the Last Day to learn from the text and by grace grow into good servants. There is a sense of urgency in the propers that is often lost on us as we hear the warnings from the lessons at the close of the church year. We are probably more concerned about such inevitable dates as April 15. But, Jesus tells us, He too will demand a full accounting of how we administered His gifts given so that the Kingdom might grow here on earth. Our excuses try to turn things around and to blame our laziness on the Master; but God changes us through Word and Sacrament so that we begin constructive work. Christ calls on men to be neither negative nor static in their living, but by faithful use of gifts large or small to enter the door He opens to greater usefulness. He does not tell faithful servants to enter their rest, but trusts them with greater things and extends an invitation to share in His joy in the Messianic era to come.

"I Knew You Were a Hard Man"

and Other Handy Excuses for the Last Day

- I. "I knew You were a hard man" so I make excuses.
 - A. My excuses are a sign of my nature.
 1. Often I don't want to be a servant (v. 26—wicked).
 2. I'm too lazy to work at being a profitable servant (v. 18, 26).
 - B. My excuses block positive action.
 1. I am afraid to try because I believe my excuses (v. 24).
 2. I am not going to do something and then get caught with more responsibilities (v. 21).
- II. "I knew You were a hard man" but then I learned You were hard on Yourself too.
 - A. You got involved with people.
 1. You are the Ancient of Days who refused to let go of Your creation.
 2. You came as the Son of Man to win the right to be Judge. (Phil. 2:5 f. and others)
 - B. Your involvement took the wrath of God on Yourself.
 1. You stood between me and death.
 2. You give me faith, love, and the hope of salvation. (1 Thess. 5:1-11)
- III. "I knew You were a hard man" and You stopped my excuses.
 - A. You showed me there is much that I can do.
 1. You give me gifts before You give me responsibilities.
 2. You expect these gifts to make the Kingdom grow.
 - B. I may even become a servant who makes a profit for You.
 1. I must go into the world to trade because the time is getting short.
 2. I am waiting for Your return when I may share in Your joy.

Trinity 26—Nov. 26, 1972

THIRTY-FOURTH OR LAST SUNDAY
OF THE YEAR

Roman Ordo

Ezek. 34:11-12, 15-17

1 Cor. 15:20-26, 28

Matt. 25:31-46

The Standard Lessons

Is. 65:17-19

1 Thess. 5:1-11

Matt. 25:1-13

The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of Christ the King on the last Sunday of the church year. This feast sets the theme for the day, but it follows closely the traditional pattern for the Last Sunday and relates as the Sunday next before Advent to the theme of Christ the coming King.

The Gospel shows Christ as King on His

throne, judging. This is a King who rules His people as a loving Shepherd who cares for His flock, as the Old Testament Lesson describes Him. Yet the goats are sorted out, for theirs is not the promised reward. Christ's sovereignty arises from His resurrection and His promise of our resurrection through Him. The Epistle moves to 1 Corinthians to develop this.

In the Standard Lessons the emphasis drawn from the final coming is that God will have His day when He will destroy and make new. Those who know Him await His coming with gladness. The Gospel is a reminder to be ready for the Lord's return with the warning that not all will be prepared.

When Matt. 25:31-46 is used as a preaching text, the emphasis can be placed on Christ the King who comes in judgment. But the question at once arises, "How will the Christian stand before Him on that coming great day?" Lutherans are rightly cautious of saying too much about the place of good works in the Christian's life. This text gives us an opportunity not to say too little. Here it is simply stated that Christ saves people who do good works. We note that these are the "blessed" ones who already have a kingdom waiting. Hence these who gather in faith today in the house of God are included among the blessed. Once again we have opportunity to proclaim that Christians are to be active in these last days as they serve Christ with deeds and not with words alone.

Matt. 25:31-46

The Shepherd-King Who Saves People
That Do Good Works

- I. Self-sight blinds people to all but self.
 - A. It blinds us to the sight of the goal ahead.
 - 1. We do not see Christ (v. 44).

- 2. We do not see a future aside from self-interest (Gospel).
- B. It blinds us to the people who are all about us.
 - 1. We are blind to our brotherhood with them (v. 44).
 - 2. We are blind to their needs.

II. Christ-sight sees more than a Child whose Advent we await.

- A. It sees a King beneath swaddling clothes, sweat, blood, et al.
 - 1. We see a King who chose the way of humility (cf. "Son of Man" with Phil. 2:5 f.).
 - 2. We see a King who chose to die (Phil. 2:8).
- B. It sees forward to the last day when all the work of the Messiah is completed.
 - 1. We see Him King of all nations by virtue of His victory (Phil. 2:10).
 - 2. We see the King who returns a restored creation to the Father (13:43; 1 Cor. 15:24).

III. Christ-sight blinds people only to self-interest: not to others.

- A. It blinds us to self-interest.
 - 1. We are not merely favor-seekers (v. 37-39).
 - 2. We do not even choose what is good for us (Rom. 8:35 f.).
- B. It gives us sight because our "love is of God" (1 John).
 - 1. We love because we have been loved.
 - 2. We are people-orientated in our love.

DONALD SCHULTZ
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Introduction to the 1971 Revision of the Historic Western Pericopes for the Church Year

Note on New Series

We have completed with this issue a first look at the 3-year cycle developed by the Roman Catholic Church. One year from now the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship proposals for a 3-year cycle for American Lutheranism will be available. Before looking at those texts, it may be helpful to consider again the possibilities of a 1-year cycle of lessons. This is the direction that European Lutheranism is taking, and another meeting under Lutheran World Federation sponsorship this fall will further confirm this position. During the coming church year, CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY proposes to devote the homiletics section to a study of the 1971 revision of the historic western pericopes which was prepared as an interim study by the lectionary subcommittee of the ILCW. In the new series, we are asking our contributors to furnish both a brief exegetical study of the text and a suggested preaching outline. Our readers tell us that they find this kind of homiletical material most useful.

"It should be noted that the use of this revised lectionary will put certain of the lessons 'out of context' with some of the propers," the Rev. E. Theodore De Laney of the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod writes. He further invites those who use it to share their reactions through the Commission office with the members of the ILCW committee. The material which follows has been supplied as introduction and as basic rubrics for the use of the texts, which are then listed for the entire year.

GEORGE W. HOYER

Most churches are in the process of lectionary revision or have just recently completed it. This revision is the work of the Lectionary Subcommittee of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. The members of the subcommittee have studied a number of proposals including the 3-year cycle of lessons in the Roman *Ordo Lectionum Missae* (1969), the 2-year cycle of the Church of England (1969), and a revision by German and Scandinavian Lutherans of the traditional 1-year cycle which has been used in much of western Christendom.

The subcommittee set as its initial task the revision of the historic western pericopes. It is also at work on a detailed study of the *Ordo* with the intention of producing a revision of that document.

Study and revision of the traditional pericopes have been a helpful and necessary step toward consideration of the *Ordo*, since readings in the *Ordo* cycle sometimes agree with traditional selections. The revision here pro-

vided can also become a transition to any future 3-year cycle not only by introducing new selections for a given Sunday, but also by encouraging people to think of a broader variety of readings for any given Sunday in the year. It should be noted that the new selections often have considerable ecclesiastical tradition behind them, as well as being selected for theological reasons or because of insights of Biblical scholarship.

A greater richness of Scriptural treasures for the people of God—this is the general principle under which the revision was carried out. The criteria by which specific selections were made are many in number—origin and history of the choice, ecumenical usage, relation to other lessons that Sunday and on contiguous Sundays of the church year, readability, balance within the canon of the Bible, length of the selection, relation to historic emphases of the Christian faith, etc. But in general there has been special concern for (1) the relationship of each

lesson to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; (2) "preachability;" and (3) reflection in our readings of the "whole counsel of the Word of God," so that pericope selections set forth as fully as possible the truths of the Scriptural witness to God's revelation.

In particular, the basis for this revision has been the German-Scandinavian revision of 1970, though other historic lectionaries have also been used. The result, it is hoped, is a series of lessons reflecting venerable tradition, in harmony with a major portion of world Lutheranism, and yet reflective of the North American scene and contemporary concerns and insights.

Upon comparison with the historic series, these major differences emerge: greater variety of choices for some Sundays, thorough revamping of the Old Testament selections, and modification of calendar terminology. (See below under Rubrics)

This revision should be regarded as provisional and tentative, subject to improvement at many points as it is tested by use. Its compilers will welcome reactions and suggestions so that the best possible cycle of readings may emerge.

Some Rubrics and Explanations for Using the 1971 Pericope Revision

1. A complete set of lessons (Old Testament, Epistle or its equivalent, Gospel) for 1 year is here provided for every Sunday and major and minor festival in calendars in use now among American Lutherans.
 - a. In general the calendar days and names are in agreement with recent liturgical reforms in most Protestant and Catholic groups. Thus, pre-Lenten Sundays (the "-gesimas") become Sundays after Epiphany, Sundays after Trinity are numbered after Pentecost, etc. Sundays of the Easter season are numbered "Second of Easter," etc.
 - b. Traditional names are given in parentheses (or can be supplied). E.g., Pentecost I = Trinity; Lent III = Oculi; Last Sunday After Epiphany = Transfiguration (regarded as the climax of that cycle, just before Ash Wednesday and Lent).
 - c. The traditional calendar presently in use provides for a variable date for Easter, with the church year adjusted by expanding or contracting the Sundays after Epiphany and the Sundays in Trinity accordingly. Proposed calendrical reforms call for a fixed Sunday date for Easter, with always the same number of Sundays in Epiphany and in Pentecost. The German-Scandinavian revision of 1970, assuming a variable date for Easter, has handled this matter by doubling up on the lessons assigned for Epiphany III—V and Trinity XXII—XXIV; i.e., if in a given year there is no Third Sunday After Epiphany, the lessons then assigned are read on the Twenty-second Sunday in Trinity, etc. In order to provide complete coverage, regardless of whether the traditional calendar is followed or a new one with the number of Sundays in Epiphany and in Pentecost always the same, we have provided a different set of lessons for every Sunday which can possibly occur (nine in Epiphany, 27 in Pentecost), although in some cases, where there is an either/or under the traditional calendar, parallel passages have sometimes been selected, i.e., the Markan parallel to a Matthean passage, a Colossians parallel to Ephesians.
 - d. In any case, the lessons appointed for the next-to-last and last Sundays after Epiphany (Transfiguration) should always be read on the two Sundays previous to Ash Wednesday, and the lessons for the next-to-last and last Sundays

after Pentecost should always be read as the last two Sundays of the church year.

2. All chapter and verse references, as well as beginnings and endings within a verse are given in terms of the Revised Standard Version. Occasionally lectors may wish to add "Jesus said" in beginning a Gospel Lesson, or "Brethren" to an Epistle, or identify pronouns from the context. Anyone using some other translation (KJV, NEB, TEV, NAB) should check the beginning and ending of an assigned passage and adjust the starting or stopping point accordingly, if necessary, to fit sentence structure there.
3. Verses placed in parentheses may be omitted in public reading if a shorter lesson is desired, but are part of the suggested lesson and should be included in background study.
4. Where A and B sets of lessons are provided (Christmas, Easter), one may be used for an early service, one for a later service, but such specific designations have not been provided. For Pentecost, alternate sets of lessons have been provided; one set or the other should be read (each provides the basic Acts 2 account), but they should not be mixed. On these three major Feast days, one set of lessons could be read one year, the other the next.
5. In some instances a choice is to be made out of the richness of possible lessons provided (e.g., Gospel for Pentecost I, Old Testament Lesson for Good Friday). For certain days a series of lessons are provided (e.g., Humiliation and Prayer), from which the most appropriate for local circumstances should be selected.
6. In Lent a continuous reading of the Passion Story in Mark is also suggested for Sunday reading, by itself or in place of the Gospel for the Day.

Historic Pericope Series Revision, 1971

- Verses in parentheses may be omitted
- Instructions on beginnings and endings based on RSV

Proprium de tempore

Advent, First in

Is. 62:10-12
 Rom. 13:10-14 a
 (end "... put on the Lord Jesus Christ.")
 Luke 19:29-38

Advent, Second in

Mal. 4:1-6
 Heb. 12:25-29
 Mark 13:19-27

Advent, Third in

Is. 40:1-8
 Rom. 15:4-13
 Matt. 3:1-12

Advent, Fourth in

Jer. 23:5-6
 Phil. 4:4-7
 Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:46-55

Christmas Eve

Is. 9:2(3-5), 6-7
 Titus 2:11-14
 Luke 2:1-20

Christmas Day A

Micah 5:2-4
 Heb. 1:1-6
 Luke 2:1-20

Christmas Day B

Ezek. 37:24-28
 Titus 3:4-8 a
 (end "... the saying is safe.")
 John 1:1-14

Christmas, First After

Is. 63:7-9
 1 Cor. 1: (18-20) 21-25
 Luke 2:25-38

New Year's Eve

Jer. 24:1-7(8-10)

- Rom. 8:31 b-39
 (begin "If God is for us . . .")
 Luke 13:6-9
- Jan. 1, The Name of Jesus
 Num. 6:22-27
 Gal. 4: (1-3) 4-7
 Luke 2:21
- Christmas, Second After
 1 Sam. 2:1-10
 1 John 5:11-13
 Luke 2:39-52
- Epiphany
 Is. 60:1 (2-4), 5-6
 Eph. 3:1-12
 Matt. 2:1-12
- Epiphany, First After
 Is. 42:1 (2-4), 5-7
 1 Cor. 1:26-31
 Mark 1:9-11 or Matt. 3:13-17
- Epiphany, Second After
 Is. 61:1-3
 James 1:17-18
 John 2:1-11
- Epiphany, Third After
 Is. 49:1-6
 Rom. 1:16-17
 Matt. 8:5-17
- Epiphany, Fourth After
 Ex. 15:1-13 (14-18)
 Eph. 1:15-23
 Matt. 8:23-27
- Epiphany, Fifth After
 Deut. 7:6-9
 1 Cor. 1:4-9
 Matt. 13:24-30 (36-43)
- Epiphany, Sixth After
 Jer. 9:23-24
 1 Cor. 9:19-27
 Matt. 20:1-16
- Epiphany, Seventh After
 Amos 8:11-12
 Heb. 4:12-13
 Luke 8:4-15
- Epiphany, Next to Last After
 Is. 50:4-7 (8-9)
- 1 Cor. 13:1-13
 Mark 8:31-38
- Epiphany, Last After (Transfiguration)
 Ex. 24:4 b-18
 (begin "And he rose . . .")
 2 Peter 1:16-21 or 2 Cor. 4:6-10
 Luke 9:28-36
- Ash Wednesday
 Is. 59:12-20
 2 Cor. 5:19—6:2
 Matt. 11:20-30
- Lent, First in
 Gen. 3:1-19
 Heb. 4:14-16 [cf. Epiphany 7]
 Matt. 4:1-11
- Lent, Second in
 Is. 5:1-7
 Rom. 5:6-11
 Mark 12:1-12
- Lent, Third in
 Jer. 20:7-12
 Rom. 12:1-2 or Eph. 5:1-2, 6-9
 Luke 9:51-62
- Lent, Fourth in
 Is. 54:7-10
 2 Cor. 1:3-7
 Matt. 5:1-12 [cf. Pentecost]
- Lent, Fifth in
 Gen. 18:20-21, 22 b-33 [cf. Pentecost 10]
 (omit "so the men turned from there
 and went toward Sodom. But . . .")
 Heb. 9:15-22 or Rom. 5:1-5
 Mark 10:32-45
- Lent, Sixth in
 Is. 52:13—53:4 or Zech 9:9-12
 Phil. 2:5-11
 John 12:12-24 or Matt. 21:1-9
- N.B. The following may be used as a continuous reading of the Passion during Lent as alternates to the Gospel appointed, or on successive days in Holy Week.
- Lent 1, Mark 14:17-26 (27-31)
 Lent 2, Mark 14: (27-31) 32-42
 Lent 3, Mark 14:43-50 (51-52)
 Lent 4, Mark 14:53-65

- Lent 5, Mark 14:66-72
 Lent 6, Mark 15:1-15
 Maundy Thursday, Mark 15:16-20
 or Luke 22:14-34
 Good Friday, Mark 15:(20)21-39
- Maundy Thursday
 Ex. 12:1-12
 1 Cor. 11:23-26 or 1 Cor. 11:17-32
 John 13:1-15
- Good Friday
 Is. 53:4-12 [cf. Palm Sunday] or
 Hos. 6:1-6
 2 Cor. 5:14-21 or Heb. 5:(1-6)7-9
 John 19:16-30(31-42)
- Easter Eve
 Dan. 3:8-25
 1 Cor. 15:55-58
 Matt. 28:1-10
- Easter Day A
 Dan. 12:1 c-3 or Job 19:25-27
 (begin "At that time your people...")
 Col. 3:1-4 or 1 Cor. 5:6-8
 Mark 16:1-8
- Easter Day B
 Jonah 2:2-9
 (begin "I called to the Lord...")
 1 Cor. 15:12-20 or Acts 10:34, 43
 John 20:1-9 (10-18) or Luke 24:33-49
- Easter, Second of
 Ezek. 37:1-14
 1 Peter 1:3-9
 John 20:19-31 or Luke 24:13-35
- Easter, Third of
 Ezek. 34:11-16
 1 Peter 2:21 b-25
 (begin "Christ also suffered...")
 John 10:11-16
- Easter, Fourth of
 Is. 40:25-31
 1 John 5:1-10 [cf. Christmas 2]
 John 14:15-21
- Easter, Fifth of
 1 Chron. 16:23-31
 Col. 3:12-17
 John 16:4 b-15
 (begin "I did not say...")
- Easter, Sixth of
 Is. 55:6-11
 1 Tim. 2:1-8
 Luke 11:5-13 or John 16:23b-24(25-31),
 32-33
 (begin "Truly, truly I say to you...")
- Ascension
 Is. 45:18-25 or Dan. 7:13-14
 Acts 1:4-11 or Eph. 4:7-13
 Matt. 28:16-20
- Easter, Seventh of
 Ezek. 36:24-27
 Eph. 3:14-21
 John 15:26-16:4 a
 (end "... told you of them.")
- Pentecost

Joel 2:28-29	or	Acts 2:1-8(9-13), 14-18(19-20), 21-24(25-31), 32-33(34-35), 36-42
Acts 2:1-8(9-11), 12-18		1 Cor. 12:4-11
John 14:23-27		John 3:16-21
- Pentecost, First After (Trinity)
 Is. 6:1-8
 Eph. 1:3-14
 John 3:1-8 or Matt. 28:16-20
- Pentecost, Second After
 Ex. 20:1-17
 1 John 3:11-18
 Luke 16:19-31
- Pentecost, Third After
 Deut. 8:11-20 or Zech. 1:3-6
 Eph. 2:13-22 or Rev. 3:14-22
 Luke 14:15-24
- Pentecost, Fourth After
 Micah 7:18-20
 1 Tim. 1:12-16
 Luke 15:11-32
- Pentecost, Fifth After
 Gen. 50:15-21
 Rom. 12:14-21
 Matt. 18:21-35
- Pentecost, Sixth After
 Lam. 3:22-26 or Ex. 3:1-15

- 1 Peter 2:4-10
 Luke 5:1-11
- Pentecost, Seventh After
 Is. 43:1-7 or Jer. 17:9-13
 Rom. 6:1-11
 John 4:5-15 (16-26)
- Pentecost, Eighth After
 Ex. 16:2-3, 11-18
 Acts 2:38-47
 John 6:1-14
- Pentecost, Ninth After
 Gen. 12:1-4 a (4 b-7)
 (end ". . . as the Lord had told him.")
 Gal. 5:16-25
 Matt. 5:13-16
- Pentecost, Tenth After
 Ex. 32:1-7 (8-14), 15-20 (30-34)
 Phil. 3:7-11
 Matt. 25:14-30
- Pentecost, Eleventh After
 Dan. 9:15-18
 Rom. 9:1-5, 10:1-4
 Luke 19:41-48
- Pentecost, Twelfth After
 2 Chron. 1:7-12
 1 Peter 5:5 b-11
 (begin "Clothe yourselves . . .")
 Luke 18:9-14
- Pentecost, Thirteenth After
 Is. 29:18-21
 2 Cor. 12:6-10
 Mark 7:31-37
- Pentecost, Fourteenth After
 Gen. 4: (1-7) 8-16 a
 (end ". . . from the presence of the Lord.")
 1 John 4:7-11
 Luke 10:25-37
- Pentecost, Fifteenth After
 Gen. 28:10-19 a
 (end ". . . that place Bethel.")
 Rom. 8:12-17
 Luke 17:11-19
- Pentecost, Sixteenth After
 1 Kings 17:8-16
- 2 Cor. 6:1-10
 Matt. 6:25-33
- Pentecost, Seventeenth After
 1 Kings 17:17-24
 1 Cor. 15:1-11
 Luke 7:11-16 or John 11:17-27
- Pentecost, Eighteenth After
 Gen. 8:18-22
 Gal. 3:26-28
 Matt. 26:26-29 or Mark 14:22-25
- Pentecost, Nineteenth After
 Deut. 6:4-15
 Rom. 13:5-10
 Mark 12:28-34 or Matt. 22:34-40
- Pentecost, Twentieth After
 Ex. 34:4 b-10
 (begin "Moses . . . rose up early . . .")
 Eph. 4:22-30
 Matt. 9:1-8
- Pentecost, Twenty-first After
 Ex. 33:17-23
 Rom. 10:9-17
 (begin "If you confess . . .")
 Matt. 15:21-28
- Pentecost, Twenty-second After
 Joshua 24:1-2 a, 14-18 (22-28)
 (v. 2 a: "And Joshua said to all the people.")
 Acts 4:23-31
 Matt. 5:38-48
- Pentecost, Twenty-third After
 Micah 6:6-8
 Acts 6:1-7
 Mark 12:41-44
- Pentecost, Twenty-fourth After
 Ex. 14:10, 26-31
 Col. 1:9-14 (15-23) [cf. Epiphany 4]
 Mark 4:35-41 [cf. Epiphany 4]
- Pentecost, Twenty-fifth After
 Ezek. 33:10-16
 Gal. 1:6-9 [cf. Epiphany 5]
 Matt. 13:44-52 [cf. Epiphany 5]
- Pentecost, Twenty-sixth After
 (next-to-last-Sunday)
 Amos 5:14-20

- Phil. 3:17-21 or Rom. 8:18-23
Matt. 25:31-46
- Pentecost, Twenty-seventh After
(last Sunday)
Is. 65:17-25
Rev. 21:1-7
Matt. 25:1-13
- Proprium de sanctis*
- St. Andrew, Nov. 30
Ezek. 3:16-21
2 Cor. 4:1-5
John 1:35-42
- St. Thomas, Dec. 21
Judges 6:36-40
Eph. 4:11-16
John 14:1-7
- St. Stephen, Dec. 26
2 Chron. 24:17-22
Acts 6:8-15, 7:1-2 a, 51-60
Matt. 23:34-39
- St. John, Dec. 27
Gen. 1:1-5, 26-31
1 John 1:1—2:2
John 21:20-25
- Holy Innocents, Dec. 28
Jer. 31:15-17
Rev. 14:1-5 or 1 Peter 4:12-19
Matt. 2:13-18
- Conversion of St. Paul, Jan. 25
Is. 42:6-9 or Jer. 1:4-10
Acts 9:1-22 Gal. 1:11-24
Matt. 19:27-29 Matt. 19:27-29
- Presentation, Feb. 2
1 Sam. 1:21-28
Heb. 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-32
- St. Matthias, Feb. 24
Is. 66:1-2
Acts 1:15-26
Luke 6:12-16
- Annunciation, March 25
Is. 7:10-14
1 Tim. 3:16
Luke 1:26-38
- St. Mark, April 25
Is. 52:7-10
2 Tim. 4:6-11, 18
Mark 1:1-15
- St. Philip and St. James, May 1
Mal. 3:16-18
Heb. 12:18-24 or Rev. 5:1-14
John 14:1-13 a or John 14:8-14
- The Nativity of St. John the Baptist, June 24
Mal. 3:1-4
Acts 19:1-7
Luke 1:51-67 (68-80)
- Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29
Jer. 26:12-16
1 Cor. 3:16-23 or 1:10-17
Matt. 16:13-19 (20-23)
- Visitation, July 2
Judges 13:2-7 or Is. 11:1-5
1 Peter 3:1-5 a
Luke 1:39-47
- St. Mary Magdalene, July 22
Prov. 31:10-31
1 Peter 3:1-6
John 20:1-2, 11-18 or Luke 8:1-3
- St. James the Elder, July 25
1 Kings 19:9-18
1 Cor. 4:9-15 or Acts 11:27—12:3 a
(end "... Peter also.")
Matt. 20:20-28
- St. Bartholomew, Aug. 24
Ex. 19:1-6
1 Cor. 12:27-31 a
Luke 22:24-30
- St. Matthew, Sept. 21
Ezek. 2:8—3:11 or Hosea 11:1-4, 8-9
Eph. 2:4-10
Matt. 9:9-13
- St. Michael and All Angels, Sept. 29
Joshua 5:13-15 or Dan. 10:10-14, 12:1-3
Rev. 12:7-12
Luke 10:17-20
- St. Luke, Oct. 18
Is. 43:8-13 or Is. 35:5-8

- Acts 28:23-31
 Luke 1:1-4, 24:44 ("Then *Jesus* said . . .")
 to 53
- Sts. Simon and Jude, Oct. 28
 Jer. 26: (1-6) 7-16
 1 John 4:1-6
 John 15:17-25
- Reformation, Oct. 31
 Jer. 31:31-34
 Rom. 3:21-28 or 1 Cor. 3:11-23
 John 8:31-36 or John 18:14-26
- All Saints, Nov. 1
 Is. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21
 Rev. 21:9-11, 22-27 (22:1-5)
 John 11:32-44
- Thanksgiving
 Deut. 8:1-10
 Acts 17: (16-21), 22-32
 John 6:24-35 or Luke 17:11-19
- Harvest
 Deut. 26:1-11
 2 Cor. 9:6-15
 Luke 12: (13-14), 15-21
- A Day of Humiliation and Prayer
 Is. 1:16-18 or Jer. 8:4-7 or Ps. 85
 Rom. 2:1-11 or Rev. 3:1-6 or Heb. 12:12-17
 Luke 6:46-49 or Matt. 4:12-17
- Dedication of a Church
 1 Kings 8:22-30
 Eph. 2:19-22
 Matt. 5:14-16
- Missions Festival
 Is. 42:5-12 or Is. 12:2-6
 Acts 13:47-49 Acts 11:19-26
 (begin "The Lord
 has commanded
 us . . .")
 Matt. 28:16-20 | John 17:11b, 17-25