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On A Final Note...

The Meaning of Christmas in the Images of Advent: Christmas Chorale 1992

By Walter Krueger

On the first weekend in November, stores will deck their halls with tinsel and glitter. On the first weekend in December, the Concordia College Choir again presents its annual Christmas Chorale. Do we truly welcome this yearly expectation of His coming? Lessons will be read, bells rung, carols sung.

The deeper mysteries of Christmas are best explored in a setting removed from daily routine, such as the beautiful, candlelit sanctuary of Saint Michael's Lutheran Church located at Northeast Twenty-Ninth and Dekum. Concordia's Christmas Chorale has become a twenty-eight year old tradition. The story is both timeless and compelling. Retreat with us to Christmas!

Amid the flickering candlelight and the quietness of the moment, images of Advent soon appear. Way back in the dim recesses of Genesis, God made a covenant. In that covenant, all nations are blessed through the Messiah who would be born from

Abraham's seed. How God so loved the world, we ponder!

Soon the harmonious and soothing sounds of the choir change to the shrill trumpet cry of the prophet herald, another image of Advent. "Behold your king comes to you! Make straight a highway in the desert." There are deserts in Judea and deserts in our lives, we reflect. How is God to be born among us today? Will the glory of the Lord reveal itself with earth-shattering light and splendor? Or, is the glow an inward one, the light of renewed hope? In the quietness, we meditate. "Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors," comes an echo from the wilderness.

What about that great and promised day of the Lord? We watch and wait for it, but how much longer? We pray for it, but are we prepared? How hard it was for all ten young ladies to have enough oil in their lamps! Another Advent image unfolds. We, the Church, also await a Bridegroom! It's time we were ready and prayed "Come, Emmanuel, Come."

Mary, the "handmaid of the Lord," portrays another rich picture of Advent. How well she knew the meaning of God-with-us! Mother-love best knows the personal sacrifice and inconvenience demanded for in birth. Yet, her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced.

Though earth be it coldest, and night its darkest, the flower is alive, the promise is growing. The pure, the spotless rose is blooming even at deepest midnight hour. Innocence aglow in a world of sin!

Yet, the season is not without earthly splendor of a kind. The traditional Eastern visitors present quite a sight for us. The masters of their own halls, the Magi made extended travel plans to follow a star only to find themselves in a lowly stable! We, the masters of our own halls, give up domestic comfort to see, to hear, to ponder on this night. We softly tap our feet with the eternal pulses, and we absorb the

rhythm of "Christ-among-us." How merrily the bells are now ringing! We hear the Christmas angels!

So, let there be Christmas! Let there be fond, familiar images of shepherds and angels, of mangers and holy birth. It takes no less than an Advent journey each year to ensure that Christ is born not only in Judean wilderness, but once again in our hearts this year. Greet the infant King with holly and ivy, merry bells and sweet singing in the choir! Good Christian friends, rejoice!